



SOME ACCOUNT
OF THE
INTRODUCTION OF METHODISM
INTO THE
CITY, AND SOME PARTS OF THE COUNTY,
OF
Chester;
TOGETHER WITH BRIEF
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES
OF SEVERAL
EMINENT CHARACTERS
Connected therewith.

BY J. JANION, SENIOR, OF CHESTER.

CHESTER :
PRINTED BY EVANS & SON, FOREGATE-STREET.

1833.

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BY J. JAMISON, SENIOR, OF CHESTER.

PRINTED BY EVANS & SON, FORTCASTLE STREET.

1833.

ADDRESS TO THE READER,

BY A MINISTER.

It is hoped that this brief and unpretending Narrative will be perused with no ordinary degree of interest, and that all needful forbearance will be extended to any thing it may possibly contain, which may appear, to persons of refined taste, to be inaccurately or abruptly expressed; especially when it is considered, that its author is an "old disciple," having been a member of the Methodist Society during the long period of about sixty years—that he has been instructed in the schools of long experience and sanctified affliction—that its pages were penned, not only after he had attained to the days of the years of man, which are three score years and ten, but subsequently to his completing those ten additional years which are usually but labour and sorrow—that he feels much more solicitous about the matter and usefulness of his performance than about its style, and that his sole design, in compiling these

records and submitting them to the public eye, is, that he may glorify the God of all his mercies, by rendering his generation some service, before he shall go the way of all the earth, which he expects soon to do.

May God fulfil the desire of his aged servant, by rendering his little work the instrument of stimulating the rising generation, and particularly the descendants and relatives of the pious dead whom it records, not to be slothful in the great business of life, but "followers of them who through faith and patience now inherit the promises!"

PART I.

CONTAINING A BRIEF

MEMOIR OF THE REV. JOHN WESLEY, A.M.

THE Rise and Progress of Methodism in these Kingdoms, and its introduction into other parts of the world, by means of the Rev. John and Charles Wesley, and the Rev. George Whitfield, are events in which millions of precious souls are interested—events which call for the liveliest gratitude to Almighty God, for raising up and qualifying such eminently burning and shining lights, to spread Scriptural Christianity among the various nations of the earth.

Of these honourable three, it will perhaps be generally admitted, that John Wesley was the most extensively useful. He was a deeply pious and truly great man, and a most eminent Christian minister. By his instrumentality, religion has been revived with great success, not only in the United Kingdom, but in America and various other parts of the globe. His grandfather, John Wesley, was one of the Non-conforming ministers who suffered so severely by the black Bartholomew Act, which passed early in the reign of Charles II. By this unrighteous edict, he was ejected from the living of Blandford, in Dorsetshire. In this

persecuted condition, he designed his son, Samuel, for the Christian ministry among the Dissenters; and, accordingly, sent him to one of their academies. But, while he was there, his sentiments were so altered, that he left the academy without consulting any of his relations, and entered as a student of Exeter College, Oxford. After taking his degrees in the usual way, he was ordained, and appointed chaplain of a man of war, and was afterwards presented to the livings of Epworth and Wroote, both in the county of Lincoln. He married the youngest daughter of Dr. Samuel Annesley, a celebrated Non-conformist minister, and first cousin to the Earl of Anglesea; by whom he had 19 children, of whom the most distinguished was JOHN, afterwards Father of the Methodist Connexion.

He was born at Epworth, June 17, 1703. When but six years of age, he narrowly escaped being burnt to death in the parsonage-house, which was so dreadfully on fire before he was taken out of the window, that the instant he was received by his friends, the whole roof fell in. The memory of this remarkable deliverance is preserved in one of his portraits, underneath which there is a house in flames, with this inscription, "Is not this a brand plucked out of the burning?" At a very early age, his mind seems to have been impressed with sentiments of religion, which happy result may, doubtless, under God, be attributed to the great pains which his excellent mother took with him. At the early age of eight, he received the holy sacrament. When very young, he was placed in the Charter-house school, in London, under that eminent

scholar, Dr. Walker, with whom he soon became a favourite, on account of his sobriety and application. From the Charter-house, he was elected to Christ Church College, Oxford, where he took his degree of Bachelor of Arts. In the year 1726, he was elected Fellow of Lincoln College, and the following year graduated Master of Arts.

He now became conspicuous as a scholar. His acquaintance with the learned languages was so far from being superficial, that he read them as a critic, and was able to appreciate their beauties. He wrote and conversed in the Latin tongue with remarkable ease, elegance, and accuracy; and was as familiar with the Greek Testament as with the English. He published five volumes on Natural Philosophy, which shew how carefully he had studied that branch of science. His skill in Logic was proverbial. His talent for Poetry was by no means inconsiderable, but he did not cultivate it to any great extent after he left the University; being fully employed in that higher work to which he was called. Nevertheless, the pieces which he has published abundantly prove the strength and elegance of his poetic genius. In his 24th year, he was appointed Greek lecturer and moderator of the classes.

It was in the year 1725 that he entered upon that sacred profession for which his father had from the beginning designed him. He was ordained by Dr. Potter, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, and preached his first sermon at South Lye, near Oxford. About this time, he met with Bishop Taylor's Rules and Exercises of Holy Living and Dying; in reading

some parts of which, he was so exceedingly affected, that he resolved to dedicate his whole life to God, looking upon religion as a uniform following of our Lord Jesus Christ. With these views, he united with several young men, who were like-minded with himself. They agreed to meet together at stated times, in order to assist each other in striving to live to the glory of God. In consequence of their regularity in attending the means of grace, and diligence in every good work, they were soon taken knowledge of, and among other nicknames which were bestowed upon them, was that of *Methodist*—a name which is still applied to the Christian society of which Mr. Wesley was the founder and the head, whose numbers, according to recent accounts, amount to upwards of 848,000, in various parts of the world, besides hundreds of thousands who attend their public ministry.

Little did Mr. Wesley think that he should ever become the instrument of raising up so numerous a religious body, when, by an extraordinary Providence, he was called to quit his quiet and beloved retreat at Oxford, and to go abroad as a missionary to the American Indians. With this call, notwithstanding several weighty objections, he complied, and sailed for Georgia in October, 1735. After enduring many severe trials there, he returned to his native country early in the year 1738.

Whatever the design of man might be in Mr. Wesley's going abroad, it is evident that the grand design of God was to bring him to a fuller acquaintance with the plan of salvation by faith in Christ. This

great end was accomplished by the means of some of the Moravian brethren, who sailed with him in the same vessel to America; a full account of which was published by himself many years ago. After having been a partaker for a considerable time, of "the spirit of bondage unto fear," and under his influence, passing through that painful agony of mind which is so strikingly described by the Apostle Paul, in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans—an agony which led him oft to exclaim, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" On the 24th of May, 1738, he received "the spirit of adoption," whereby he was enabled to "cry, Abba, Father." This event, so memorable to him and to us, he thus describes:—"In the evening, I went, very unwillingly, to a society in Aldersgate-street, (London) where one was reading Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me, that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death." Reader, hast *thou* this experience? If not, God grant that while thou art reading my book, his Holy Spirit may work saving faith in thy heart!

Upon Mr. Wesley's return from Georgia, he became very popular, appearing in the new character of a missionary, recently returned from preaching the gospel to the Indians in America; hence, he was invited

to preach in several of the London churches. But it was not long before the crowds who flocked to hear wherever he preached, together with the plain and heart-searching character of his preaching, gave so much offence to some, that the churches were soon shut against him. Thus he was impelled, by mere necessity, without any preconcerted plan, to go out into the highways and hedges, and preach abroad in London, Bristol, and other places, as Divine Providence appeared to open the way. By these labours of love, thousands were soon awakened to a sense of their sin and danger, who came to him for further advice and assistance in the way of God. Hence, it became necessary for him to form *societies*, in order to afford all possible help to these enquiries after salvation. Places of worship were multiplied, and the face of things was most wonderfully changed. One thing, however, he still seemed to lack for the prosecution of this great work, and that was *help*. He had tried to induce some of the regular clergy to assist him, but, with few exceptions, in vain; in that emergency, the Head of the Church opened a new way, of which he availed himself, although, at first, it shocked his remaining high church prejudices. A few plain men of his own society, who had begun by telling what God had done for their own souls, proceeded to exhort and preach; and thus, lay-preaching was introduced, an instrumentality which continues in extensive and efficient operation to this day.

Thus, by ways that he knew not, and in paths that he had not thought of, was this wonderful man led

forward, until he saw abundant fruit of his labour, and in a good old age, enjoyed the pleasure of being honoured and beloved by thousands, as their father in the gospel. He travelled and laboured indefatigably, through every part of Great Britain and Ireland. From the first formation of his societies, he took care to establish Christian discipline among them, so that his influence over them continued undiminished to the end; and great is the veneration which both preachers and people bear for his memory. At last, after a long course of unremitting and successful toil, the weary wheels of life stood still, on the 2d of March, 1791, in the 88th year of his age.

Such was the character of this truly apostolic man, that it would require uncommon abilities to do it justice. To form a great man, there must be great powers—exerted in an uncommon manner—producing extraordinary effects. Such was the case with Mr. Wesley. He possessed strong intellectual powers, a mind vigorous and comprehensive in all its faculties, a penetrating judgment, a capacious and retentive memory, a lively imagination, and a sublime genius. Being, from his infancy, educated in all the various branches of literature, which are requisite to form the scholar and the gentleman, he was qualified to have excelled in any line of life in which Divine Providence might have placed him. His publications sufficiently prove his abilities as a writer. As a preacher, he was a model worthy of the imitation of every Christian minister. His gestures were graceful and easy, and his style peculiarly perspicuous and energetic. Although

he preached without notes, yet his sermons were carefully studied. As an orator, he happily united the depth of reason with strength of language. And while he was no enthusiast, expecting the end without using the means, yet no man depended more fully on the divine influence in every religious duty, well knowing, that no good can be effected by the best of men, without the aid of the Holy Spirit.

He was mighty in the sacred oracles, whence his discourses were invariably derived. Nor was he a mere repeater of texts, but preached as one at all times aware that the Bible is the WORD OF GOD, and the unerring standard by which all human opinions are to be tried.

He had an invincible attachment to truth and justice ; he ever shewed the utmost abhorrence of all sorts of dissimulation ; and as he used no guile himself, so neither did he suspect it in others.

His love to God and man seemed to know no bounds : it was the ruling principle of his whole conduct. His compassion for the poor and needy was manifested to the very extent of his ability, seeking no other recommendation in the objects of his charity, than a sufficient evidence of suffering humanity.

He has perhaps never been surpassed, certainly seldom equalled in the redemption of time. But, though he was always diligent, yet he never appeared to be in a hurry ; he had nothing in confusion, but every thing in its proper place, where it could be readily found when wanted. To his appointments he was always exact, considering that, as he would not waste a moment

himself, so neither would he, by an ill-bred want of punctuality, occasion others to lose one. His temper was never gloomy; and having been, from his youth, a great reader, his mind was richly stored with entertaining and useful knowledge, so that his conversation was always pleasing, and often highly interesting and instructive. From seeing him only in the pulpit, and considering his exalted station in the Church of Christ, a stranger might have supposed that he would be difficult of access in private life; but every apprehension of this sort instantly vanished on being introduced into his company. Devoid of anxious care and servile fear, a placid serenity of spirit shone with ineffable sweetness through his expressive countenance, and shed its benign influence upon his extensive circle of friends, who always esteemed it an honour to be where he was. Nor had the humblest of them ought to fear from his superiority, as there was not the least affectation of learning about him, the dignity of the philosopher and divine being completely concealed in the familiarity of the friend.

He possessed too much modesty and good sense to be guilty of vain egotism: yet, being in all things strictly attentive to a particular providence, he could, with the most engaging courtesy, relate a variety of important circumstances which had occurred in his travels, to the real advantage of all present.

In short, such a man as John Wesley has seldom appeared even in the purest ages of christianity. But, great and good as he was, he has not been permitted to abide on earth, he is gone to reap his rich reward.

Nevertheless, he, being dead, yet speaketh. His life shows us to how high a degree of true greatness mortal man may attain : and his death demonstrates that the fruit of virtue is solid and eternal peace. He has left behind him monuments of greatness such as even death cannot destroy, substantial evidences of amazing talents improved to the benefit of millions of deathless spirits, who shall praise God for him for ever.

His disinterested love to the poor,—his unabating zeal in setting forth the Lord Jesus Christ to perishing sinners—his deep acquaintance with divine things, and his astonishing labours in the Church, rendered him the delight of his friends, the glory of his family, a bright example of religious excellence, a striking pattern to all christian ministers, a rare ornament of his country, and the admiration of the age in which he lived, and of all succeeding ages.

So much for our venerable founder. Methodism is his noble and imperishable monument. Its history, were it better known, would furnish many lively and edifying exemplifications of the doctrine of a special Providence, in which he was so firm a believer. Very remarkably as the great Head of the Church interposed, from time to time, in opening the way and furnishing the means for the erection of those neat and commodious sanctuaries, which we now occupy in most of the towns and considerable villages of this country. As it is, a cloud rests on many of these displays of the Divine goodness, because no records have been kept of them. It is indeed much to be lamented, that so few accounts have been preserved of the manner in which methodism

was introduced into various places in this Kingdom. And, as many of the old preachers and members are gone to their reward, it is to be feared, that much valuable information on this subject is irrecoverably lost. If, as an aged minister has well observed, those who possess any information of this sort, would give the world an account of what has appeared Providential in the commencement or progress of this great work of God, in various parts of the country, posterity would by their means have fresh cause to "praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works among the children of men." A wish to contribute to this great end, by showing how methodism was introduced into the city and adjacent parts of the county of Chester, and more especially the large and populous Parish of Frodsham, has induced me to draw up the following short account.

PART II.

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THE RISE OF METHODISM IN
THE PARISH OF BUNBURY, WITH CONCISE NOTICES OF
ITS EARLIEST ORNAMENTS.

Some years before Mr. Wesley and the first Methodist Preachers visited Cheshire, there was a society of religiously disposed persons at Bunbury, who were in the habit of meeting together regularly on the Sabbath afternoon after church service. Mr. Richard Cawley of Alpraham, was the principal person in this society; also Messrs. John, William, and Ralph Sims of the same place, and others belonged to it. They met at the house of Mr. Evans, the schoolmaster and parish clerk of Bunbury, and spent the time in singing, prayer, reading the Scriptures, and religious conversation. Thus did they feel after God, if haply they might find Him; nor was it long ere they proved that He was not far from any one of them.

I have heard my brother-in-law, Mr. Gardner, say, that the Bishop of Chester was so much pleased with the account he heard of this society at Bunbury, that, in order to encourage them in their laudable endeavours, he presented them with a copy of Burkitt's Notes on the New Testament.

It so happened that an old lady who sometimes met

with them, went up to London to visit her daughter, who was a member of the Methodist Society. She accompanied her to the preachers' class meetings and other means of grace, by which she was much edified. On her return home, she informed her Bunbury friends, of what the Lord was doing in some parts of the kingdom, by means of the Methodists; and, after mature deliberation, they resolved to invite Mr. Wesley to come over and help them. Their call was promptly obeyed by the sending of Mr. John Nelson out of Yorkshire, whose journals are published, and have long since obtained such celebrity among us. This first visit of a Methodist Preacher to this part of the country, occurred about the year 1742 or 1743. Mr. Nelson preached his first sermon under a pear tree, near the house of Mr. Stephen Cawley, (father of Mr. Richard Cawley,) in Alpraham. At this time a mob was collected together for the purpose of driving the Methodist Preacher out of the parish; and the sum of 25s. was collected to make some of them drunk, that they might be the better prepared to effect their base design. However, when they came near the place, it was suggested that it would be desirable to obtain the approbation of Richard Davenport, Esq. of Calveley Hall, a short distance from Alpraham: accordingly, without delay, they proceeded thither, and Thomas Lloyd, their ringleader, was deputed to wait upon the Squire; upon being introduced into his presence, this captain of the noisy Belial stated to Mr. Davenport the purpose for which they were come, and asked his consent to the measure, when he received an answer which deserves to be had in everlast-

ing remembrance.—“*No Thomas,*” Mr. D. firmly replied, “*by no means, suppose they should be right and we wrong, what a sad thing it would be to persecute them! I would not have them persecuted for one hundred pounds.*” A word spoke in season has good in it. Thomas and his persecuting crew were so disheartened by this repulse, that they quietly dispersed, and left the preacher to finish his discourse in peace.

Some time after this, in the year 1749, Mr. Wesley himself visited and preached at Alpraham, when Mr. Davenport sent for him to the Hall, together with Mr. Stephen Cawley, and the Rev. Mr. Lowe, the the clergyman of the parish; and desired them to give him an account of the new birth or regeneration. Mr. Lowe laid great stress upon water baptism; but Mr. Wesley dwelled rather on the genuine marks and fruits of that great work of God in the soul, observing that it implied an entire change of heart, from nature to grace, from sin to holiness, and from the love of this world to the love of God. Mr. Davenport was much affected, and said “Mr. Wesley, I understand you perfectly well, but I do not understand Mr. Lowe at all.” He also pressed Mr. Wesley to accept a piece of gold of the value of £36, and offered to send him to Mr. S. Cawley’s house in his own carriage; both which offers he respectfully declined.

Most of the persons, who had formerly met together at Bunbury, now joined the infant Methodist Society which was formed at Alpraham. The preaching continued at the house of Mr. Stephen Cawley for about a year, and was then removed to Mr. Sims’, in whose

house it continued (with the exception of one summer during which the house was rebuilt) until Christmas 1823, a period of 79 or 80 years. At that time a large room being engaged for a Sunday school, it was deemed advisable to have the preaching there, it being the more commodious place.

Since then a very neat chapel has been erected by the side of the turnpike road, in Alpraham, with which is connected a tolerable society, and in which a considerable congregation worship God every sabbath day. Besides which there has been for several years, a good chapel at Bunbury, and another in Tarporley, and several minor societies and congregations formed in the neighbouring villages, to which the society of Alpraham stands in the relation of mother church.

It is much to be regretted, that no written memorials of the first Methodists in these parts, have been handed down to the present generation. As far, however, as my memory and information will serve, I will endeavour to supply the lack of such annals.

Mr. Richard Cawley was, in early life, a person of serious habits; but it does not appear that he was brought to the saving knowledge of God, previous to his acquaintance with the Methodists, afterward he obtained the remission of his sins, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and was unblamable in his life and conversation. He was appointed leader of the first class in Alpraham, in the discharge of which important duty, he was faithful, and regularly attended all the means of grace, both at church and among the Methodists. He was particularly attentive to the morals of

his servants, taught many of them to read, and kept up family worship daily in his house ; herein setting an excellent example to all heads of families. He enjoyed the comforts of religion in no small degree, particularly towards the close of his life. His last illness continued about six weeks, and then terminated in a triumphant entrance into the joy of his Lord, Jan. the 8th, 1783, aged 67 years.

Jane, wife of Mr. Richard Cawley, was of the Sims' family. She was uniformly devoted to God from early life, and was ever seeking for opportunities of recommending to others that religion, of which she was a happy partaker. She was the subject of severe and protracted affliction, but in her patience she possessed her soul ; her last end was peace, she died March the 30th, 1781, aged 71.

On the grave stone of this pious couple, in Bunbury Church Yard, is the following very appropriate inscription :—

‘ Here lies the body of Richard Cawley of Alpraham,
 ‘ who departed this life, the 8th of January, 1783, aged
 ‘ 67. Also Jane his wife ; she died the 30th of March,
 ‘ 1781, aged 71. Whose lives from their youth, were
 ‘ devoted to God, with a steady and uniform course of
 ‘ self denial, with a studious exertion, and a most benevolent regard for the eternal good of mankind ;
 ‘ being greatly regretted by all who love our Lord
 ‘ Jesus Christ in sincerity.’

Mr. John Sims of Alpraham, was an inoffensive man and a humble follower of the Lord Jesus. Being requested to speak at one of the Alpraham Lovefeasts,

he rose and said in the simplicity of his heart, "God hath been very good to me, a poor sorry dog as I am," and then sat down again: this, as will be easily imagined, produced a greater effect upon those who were present, than ever so many fine speeches would have done. He died in peace, in May, 1776.

Mr. William Sims was religiously disposed from his youth, but it is believed that he was not made a partaker of the renewing grace of God, until he began to attend the methodist ministry, although both he and many others were indeed a people prepared of the Lord for the reception of His word. And they heard it gladly. He did not long seek salvation before he found it, after which he used frequently to say, "I am not fond of life nor afraid of death." He was appointed leader of a class in Tiverton, and continued as long as he was able faithfully to discharge the duties of that office. He professed to love the Lord with all his heart, and his life and conversation was a sufficient evidence of the truth of his profession. He had cultivated a mind naturally vigorous and intelligent, by reading, meditation and prayer; and while he maintained a proper authority over his household, he took care to walk wisely and unblamably before them, and to rule in love. The close of his life was peaceful and serene. He died in the Lord, April, 1788, at an advanced age, which cannot be ascertained, owing to a failure in the parish register.

Mr. Ralph Sims was a man of great simplicity of manners, but a true christian: it might be said of him

with great propriety, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!"—He died June, 1792.

Miss Mary Sims, or Dame Sims as she was generally called, was much devoted to God, and finished her course with joy, March, 1783, aged 78.

Neither of the three brothers Sims, nor their sister, ever entered the marriage state. They, as well as Mr. Cawley, were liberal in contributing to the support of God's cause, and very charitable to the poor.

Mr. Samuel Smith of Tattenhall, the grandfather of the present Mr. Hitchens of Alraham, married one of the Sims's family. At first he was prejudiced against the methodists, but when he heard for himself, the word came with power to his heart, and he was convinced that what he heard was the truth. Immediately he forsook his gay companions, who had been injurious to him, both in his temporal and spiritual concerns—joined the methodist society—was soon brought out of bondage into the glorious liberty of the sons of God—and continued to walk worthy of his high vocation to his life's end. In the course of time he became a very acceptable and useful local preacher, in which character he travelled into various parts of this kingdom, and preached, especially in and about Kingswood, near Bristol, where he had two sons at school. On one occasion, he met with the pious Earl of Dartmouth, who wished him to get ordained, and enter into the church, and likewise promised to help him to a living. But Mr. Smith could not see his way clear to leave the people among whom, and the path in which he had been first called; and no

worldly motive could induce him to swerve from the plain way of his duty to God and his neighbour. He continued to labour in the best of causes as long as his strength would permit, and died in great peace March 11th, 1777, aged 65 years.

Elizabeth Smith, his wife, lived a uniformly holy and devoted life, and calmly slept in Jesus, January 31st, 1780, aged 73 years.

Methodism was introduced into the city of Chester about the year 1750. The first preacher who visited its neighbourhood was Mr. John Bennett of Cheshire, in the Derbyshire Hills, who afterwards occupied the presbyterian tenement of Calvinism. He commenced his labours at Huntington Hall, then the residence of Mr. George Cotton. Thence the preaching was removed to the house of Mr. Richard Jones in Love Lane, within the City, when the first Methodist Society in Chester was formed. The house thus appropriated for their worship, soon became too small to contain the numbers who flocked to hear the word of life; upon which the society procured and fitted up a spacious hall in Martin's Ash, on the south side of St. Martin's Church. From this time they were regularly supplied by the travelling preachers, and visited by the Rev. John Wesley, on his annual excursions. Mr. Wesley gives the following account of his first visit to Chester, and the treatment that he met with there: "Saturday, June 20th, 1752. I rode to Chester and preached at six in the accustomed place, a little without the gates, near St. John's Church, one single

PART III.

THE INTRODUCTION OF METHODISM INTO THE ANCIENT CITY
OF CHESTER.

Methodism was introduced into the city of Chester about the year 1750. The first preacher who visited its neighbourhood was Mr. John Bennett of Chinley, in the Derbyshire Hills, who afterwards imbibed the peculiar tenets of Calvinism. He commenced his labours at Huntingdon Hall, then the residence of Mr. George Catton. Thence the preaching was removed to the house of Mr. Richard Jones in Love Lane, within the City, when the first Methodist Society in Chester was formed. The house thus appropriated for their worship, soon became too small to contain the numbers who flocked to hear the word of life; upon which the society procured and fitted up a capacious barn in Martin's Ash, on the south side of St. Martin's Church. From this time they were regularly supplied by the travelling preachers, and visited by the Rev. John Wesley, on his annual excursions.

Mr. Wesley gives the following account of his first visit to Chester, and the treatment that he met with there. "Saturday, June 20th, 1752, I rode to Chester and preached at six in the accustomed place, a little without the gates, near St. Johns' Church, one single

man seemed disgusted ; a poor alehouse keeper spoke a harmless word, and ran away with all speed ; all the rest behaved with the utmost seriousness, while I declared the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Sunday the 21st. I preached at seven, in a much larger house, which was just taken, near St. Martin's Church, as eminent a part of the City as Drury Lane is in London, or the horse fair was in Bristol. At church Mr. L— preached a strong, plain, and useful sermon, upon the faith of Abraham. At one I began preaching again, on 'We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.' But the house not containing half the congregation, I was obliged to stand at the door, on one side of a kind of square, large enough to contain ten or twelve thousand people. I had a few hours before spoken to a captain of a vessel, with whom I proposed to sail for Dublin; and the wind being fair, I knew not I should stay to preach another sermon in Chester. I find it useful to be in such a state of suspense, whenever I know not what will be the next hour, but lean absolutely on his disposal who knoweth and ruleth all things well.

"At four I preached in the square, to a much larger congregation, among whom were abundance of gentry; one man screamed and hollowed as loud as he could, but none seconded or regarded him, the rest of the congregation were steadily serious from the beginning to the end.

"Monday 22nd. We walked round the walls of the city, which are something more than a mile and three quarters in circumference; but there are many vacant

spaces within the walls, many gardens, and a good deal of pasture ground, so that I believe Newcastle upon Tyne, within the wall, contains a third more houses than Chester.

"The greatest convenience here is what they call the Rows, that is, covered galleries, which run through the main streets, on each side, from east to west, and from north to south; by which means, one may walk both clean and dry in any weather from one end of the city to the other.

"I preached at six in the evening, in the square, to a vast multitude, rich and poor; the far greater part, the gentry in particular, were seriously and deeply attentive; though a few of the rabble, most of them drunk, laboured to make a disturbance. One might already perceive a great increase of earnestness in the generality of the hearers; so is God able to cut short his work, to wound or heal, in whatsoever time it pleaseth him."

Here Mr. Wesley took a journey to Bristol, where he spent a few days, but he says, "On Thursday July 2nd, I reached Bilbrook and Chester. Friday 3rd, I was saying in the morning to Mr. Parker, 'Considering the good which has been done there already, I wonder the people of Chester are so quiet.' He answered, 'you must not expect it will be so always.' Accordingly, one of the first things, I heard after I came into the city was that for two nights before, the mob had been employed in pulling down the house where I had preached. I asked were there no magistrates in the city? Several answered me. "We went to the mayor after the first riot, and desired a warrant to bring the

rioters before him, but he positively refused to grant any, or to take any information about it. So being undisturbed, they assembled the next night, and finished their work. Saturday 4th, I preached in our old room.

"Sunday 5, I stood at seven in the morning near the ruins of the house, and explained the principles and practices of the sect which is every where spoken against. I went afterwards to St. Martin's church, which stands close to the place: the gentleman who officiated seemed to be extremely moved at several passages in the second lesson, Luke xvii., particularly, 'It is impossible but that offences come, but woe unto him through whom they come. It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.' He began his sermon nearly in these words:—'The last Lord's-day, I preached on doing as you would be done by, in hopes of preventing such proceedings as are contrary to all justice, mercy, and humanity. As I could not do that I have chosen these words for your present consideration, 'Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; for the son of man is not come to destroy mens lives, but to save them.' He concluded nearly thus:—'I am sorry any such outrages should be committed, particularly in the parish where I have been teaching so many years, and to how little purpose. I will remove as soon as possibly I can from a place where I can do so little good. O! what an account have they to make, who have either occasioned or encouraged such proceedings. May God grant that they may repent in time, that they

know what spirit they are of, that they may, before it is too late, acknowledge and love the truth as it is in Jesus.' I preached again at the same place at one and at four, and the whole congregation were quiet and serious." Thus far for Wesley.

It does not appear that at this early period, the Chester Society was numerous; but, when they had continued at Martin's Ash about 12 or 14 years, being strengthened by the accession of some respectable families, such as Mr. and Mrs. Bennett, Mr. and Mrs. G. Walker, Mr. G. Lowe, and others, the society purchased some premises, near the Bars, in Foregate-street, where, A.D. 1765, they erected the Octagon Chapel, and a house for the preachers. At this time, Chester was made the head of a circuit. They continued to worship in the Octagon until the year 1811, when the present handsome and capacious chapel was erected.

This noble and beautiful house, in which the descendants of the ancient Chester Methodists, together with many of their fellow-citizens, now worship the Most High, has a semicircular front to St. John-street, three entrances, a gallery on three sides, and an orchestra for the singers. The congregation is numerous and respectable. The financial affairs of the chapel, which were in a state of considerable embarrassment some years ago, are now gradually improving. The society at present numbers 361 members; and in the Sunday school at the south-west angle of the chapel, together with the branch school in Back Brook-street, about 500 children are receiving gratuitous religious instruction every Lord's-day.

*Preachers' Names who have been stationed in the
Chester Circuit since the year 1765.*

- 1765 Alexander Mathers, William Memthroe
 1766 Thomas Johnson, Parson Greenwood
 1767 Thomas Taylor, Moseley Cheek
 1768 Thomas Oliver, William Harris
 1769 John Shaw, Richard Seeds, Samuel Bardsley
 1770 Ditto. J. Guilford, R. Costerdine, W. Linnell
 1771 Thomas Guilford, B. Thomas
 1772 John Oliver, Robert Costerdine
 1773 Ditto. Thomas Briscoe
 1774 William Collins, F. Wrigley
 1775 Ditto. Thomas Carlisle
 1776 John Mason, Robert Roberts
 1777 John Murlin, Ditto
 1778 J. Barry, Robert Costerdine
 1779 Ditto, William Horner
 1780 William Boothby, Jonathan Hern
 1781 Ditto Ditto W. Simpson
 1782 John Fenwick, John Goodwin, John Oliver
 1783 Duncan Wright, Ditto, George Gibbon
 1784 Ditto Thomas Corbett, E. Jackson
 1785 Richd. Rodda, John Fletcher, M. Horne, J. Kaye
 1786 Ditto Thomas Briscoe, John Beaumont
 1787 Andrew Blair, William Ellis, James Rydall
 1788 Robert Roberts, George Lowe
 1789 Parson Greenwood, F. Truscott, J. Denton
 1790 Ditto Richard Seeds, J. Wiltshaw
 1791 James Thom, George Lowe
 1792 Francis Wrigley, Richard Condry, James Thom
 1793 John Booth, Samuel Bardsley
 1794 Ditto Owen Davis, Thomas Himmens
 1795 John McDonald, William Simpson, John Collier
 1796 John Goodwin, Robert Crowther, M. Emmitt
 1797 Ditto, Ditto, Isaac Lilly
 1798 Thomas Hutton, James Rydall, George Morley
 1799 Ditto, Ditto, Ditto
 1800 Samuel Botts, James Gill, John Penman
 1801 Alexander Suter, John Kershaw, Ditto
 1802 Ditto Joseph Cooke, George Lowe

- 1803 F. West, James Townley
 1804 Ditto Ditto
 1805 Robert Millar, Thomas Preston
 1806 Ditto Ditto
 1807 Matthew Lumb, A. B. Seckerson, J. Reynolds
 1808 John Ogilvie, Samuel Warren
 1809 Ditto Ditto
 1810 John Braithwaite, Isaac Muff
 1811 Ditto Ditto
 1812 Ditto Ditto William Hill
 1813 John Doncaster, Ditto
 1814 Thomas Pinder, Edward Oakes
 1815 Ditto Ditto
 1816 William Aver, James Blackett
 1817 Ditto Ditto
 1818 Samuel Warren, John Taylor
 1819 John Taylor, J. Sykes
 1820 J. Bogie Ditto
 1821 Ditto J. Fowler
 1822 William Coultres, Ditto
 1823 Ditto, John Greaves
 1824 Samuel Smith, Ditto
 1825 John Smith, John Hick
 1826 William Hinson, Ditto
 1827 Ditto Ditto, Charles Parry
 1828 William Jackson, J. Raynar
 1829 Ditto Ditto
 1830 Ditto Ditto
 1831 J. Shoar, Edward Walker
 1832 J. Shoar, Willam Kay

OLD TRUSTEES FOR THE OCTAGON.

| | |
|----------------|----------------|
| Thomas Bennett | John Gardner |
| George Walker | James Woolrich |
| George Lowe | Thomas Brown |
| Richard Bruce | |

TRUSTEES FOR JOHN-STREET CHAPEL.

| | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Thomas Bowers | Samuel Beckett |
| George Walker | Richard Evans |
| Matthew Harrison | Benjamin Davis |
| Joseph Janion | John Hitchings. |

PART IV.

INTRODUCTION OF METHODISM INTO THE PARISHES OF
FRODSHAM AND RUNCORN.

I shall now attempt to shew how Methodism was introduced into Frodsham parish, the circumstances of which, as the reader will perceive, are intimately connected with my own religious history.

I can trace the goodness and mercies of my God to me from my infancy. My dear and honoured parents paid particular attention to the education and government of their numerous family ; I was the youngest of 10 children, of whom six lived to marry and settle in life. Early were we habituated to attend the public ordinances of divine worship on the Sabbath ; and on the evening of that day, every individual in the family who was able, read a chapter in the Bible, after which the children and servants were catechized, and then the religious solemnities of the day closed with supplication, intercession, and thanksgiving.

The steps which led to my conversion to God, and the events of my life, with which were connected the rise and progress of Methodism among my neighbours, are as follows. About the year 1765, when I was 15 years old, Mr. Gardner of Tattenhall, a local preacher among the Methodists, married a favourite sister of mine, of whom I shall give some account in the sequel

of this narrative. As I advanced towards manhood, he lent me several religious books, particularly Hervey's Meditations among the Tombs, and his Theron and Aspasio. At that time there were no Methodists in the parish of Frodsham. If, indeed, any of the parishioners were truly pious, they unfortunately put their candle under a bushel, instead of setting it upon a candlestick that it might give light to others. About 60 years previous to this time, the great and good Matthew Henry was accustomed to preach in the parish once a month, at a place called Mickadale, where the remains of his chapel are yet to be seen. I have conversed with some of the aged persons, who at that period were his hearers; one of whom told me that she knew some of her neighbours who "went to laugh, but remained to pray." But, alas! after the lapse of three score years, scarce any fruit of his labours was to be seen.

In the year 1772, I came to the determination of making a formal dedication of myself to the Lord, in writing, agreeable to the advice of several of the Puritan divines, such as Baxter, Alleine, Flavel, and Bunyan, whose works I had previously read. Accordingly, I copied one of Dr. Doddridge's forms of self dedication, and on the 29th day of September in that year, I read it on my knees before the Lord. On the following Sabbath, the holy sacrament was to be administered at our church, and I told my father that I had a desire to communicate; he cordially approved of my design, and advised my brother also to accompany me to the table of the Lord, especially as he was four or five years older than me.

It was in the year 1773 that I first joined the Methodist Society. The leader of the class of which I then became a member, was the Rev. John Hampson, sen. some time an itinerant preacher in connexion with Mr. Wesley: this class met at Little Leigh, and Daniel Barker, Esq. and Mr. Ralph Kinsey, were among its then members. At this time, we were occasionally visited by the travelling preachers of the Liverpool Circuit, which then embraced an extensive district of country.

About the year 1774, my old friend, Mr. Shone, came, with his family, to reside in our parish. We commenced prayer-meetings in the house of a neighbour. In the following year, we announced that Mr. J. Hampson would preach in the market-house at Frodsham, which I had promised for that purpose. A few Sundays after this, my dear brother-in-law, Mr. Gardner, took his stand in the open street, and preached to a very great concourse of persons, who had been collected together from all parts of the parish, to witness this strange sight; a few turnips and potatoes were thrown at us; with this exception, but little opposition was offered. During the greater part of this summer, the preaching was continued out of doors. About Midsummer 1776, I invited Mr. Gardner, to give the inhabitants of Norley a sermon occasionally, a village which was then esteemed the most uncultivated part of Frodsham parish. Accordingly, he came: we borrowed a chair, and he took his stand and preached in the highway; under that sermon several persons were convinced of sin, particularly my respected neighbour,

Mr. George Pugh, of the New Pole. The word of mercy continued to be proclaimed out of doors until the winter set in, when a farmer invited us to his house, which we occupied till the year 1779, when we built the first Methodist chapel ever erected in this parish. There is a tolerable society and congregation at Norley to this day.

About the year 1788, the Methodists erected a small chapel at Kingsley, which is another large and populous village in the same parish, containing a population of about a thousand souls, and situated at a distance of three miles from the parish church. The small society then existing in this place was so poor, that my friend, Mr. G. Pugh and myself, were under the necessity of completing their preaching-house at our own expence. But small and feeble as this cause was at its commencement, the society and congregation had so increased in numbers, that it was found necessary several years ago, to enlarge and improve the chapel, by the addition of a gallery and two good Sunday school-rooms, in which the children may both receive instruction from their teachers and unite with the congregation in the public worship of the Most High.

Some time in the year 1790, the Methodists fitted up two bays of a barn for preaching in the town of Frodsham, which were given to them by a farmer for that purpose. This place they occupied for the space of 12 or 14 years, until Divine Providence gave them the means of erecting a substantial chapel at the east end of the town, which has, since its erection, been considerably enlarged, so that it is now capable of

accommodating 5 or 600 persons. With this chapel has been connected, for many years, a good Sunday school.

About the year 1800, my worthy friend and neighbour, Mr. Samuel Burgess of Helsby, a large and populous village situated at the distance of two or three miles from the parish church of Frodsham, fitted up a large room on his own premises, with a view of affording accommodation to his family and neighbours therein, to worship God and to hear His word. He likewise established a Sunday-school, in which 100 children receive gratuitous instruction every Lord's day. This is, probably, one of the best conducted Sunday-schools in this part of the county.

We have now four commodious chapels in this parish, in which near 500 children are instructed in the Scriptures, and from 800 to 1000 persons regularly hear words whereby they may be saved, of whom about 300 are united in Christian fellowship with the people of God. Justly may we exclaim, what hath God wrought! Triumphantly may we ask—

“Saw ye not the cloud arise,
Little as a human hand?
Now it spreads along the skies,
Hangs o'er all the thirsty land;
Lo! the promise of a shower,
Drops already from above;
But the Lord will shortly pour
All the Spirit of His love!”

Early in the year 1780, I first entered into the marriage state; immediately upon which, my wife and I set up our family altar, at which was offered to the

Most High the daily sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving, for the bounties of His providence and the blessings of His grace. A few months after we became housekeepers, we invited the Methodist travelling preachers to our house at Weston, a village in the parish of Runcorn, and they gave us a sermon once a fortnight. Here we had preaching under our own roof for thirty or forty years.

In the year 1781, preaching was commenced in Runcorn, sometimes out of doors, and sometimes in the house of a friend. After some time, I raised a class, which met on the morning of the Sabbath, before church hours; and though our beginning was very small, yet the grain of mustard-seed which was then sown is now become a great tree, so that the fowls of the air may now lodge in its branches.

PART V.

LOCAL BIOGRAPHY.

I shall now endeavour to rescue from oblivion the memory of some of my former friends and acquaintances, whom I considered to be the excellent of the earth, and who died in the fear and faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. To the consistent conversation and edifying example of them all, I have been witness; and as no memoir of the greatest part of them has yet been published, I am not without hope, that should these brief notices fall into the hands of any of their friends and relatives, they may be rendered a blessing to succeeding generations.

1. MR. RICHARD JANION, THE AUTHOR'S FATHER.

I shall begin with my dear and honoured father, who, from small beginnings, rose to considerable respectability in life. He was descended from an ancient and respectable family of Newton, in the parish of Frodsham. I find six of his name and family inserted in the oldest registers at Overton, some of them as early as the year 1594. My great grandfather, Richard Janion, was baptised August 21, 1622. His son and my grandfather, Joseph Janion, married a person of the name of Carrington, and removed from Newton to Higher Runcorn, which was his wife's native place, probably about A.D. 1690 or 1694. Here they had

seven or eight children, who were baptised at Runcorn Church, of whom the two youngest were daughters, Mary and Dorothy. Dorothy married Mr. Peter Johnson of Dobhill. My father was their youngest son; he was born October 29, 1709, and baptised on the 13th of the following month.

My grandfather, Joseph Janion, was a man of excellent character, which so highly recommended him to the notice of the Rev. Mr. Cheshire, at that time vicar of Runcorn, that through his recommendation, Lady Aston, at that time a widow, let my father, about two years after his marriage, one of the best and largest farms in the township of Aston, and that in preference to some others who were recommended to her by Tonkinson the steward. I have heard him more than once relate the following anecdote of this worthy lady. On one rent day she came among her tenants, and enquired of them how their farms were likely to answer; in reply to which enquiry, several of them greatly complained; my father, however, was an exception; when she asked him, Richard, how will your's answer? he replied, "Madam, with the blessing of God, I hope we shall do very well." This frank reply pleased her ladyship exceedingly, and he fared the better for it.

Here I was born on the 16th of October, 1750, at the farm called the Parkside, within a quarter of a mile of Aston Hall. I was the youngest of ten children. My parents lived 27 years under the family at Aston. About the year 1763, we removed to a leasehold estate called Bradley Orchard, in the parish of Frodsham,

which my father had then recently purchased, and which now belongs to the Marquis of Cholmondeley.

There was another family of the name of Janion in the parish of Runcorn; they are sometimes called Jennings of Norton, or Janions of Eadley Wood. I know not whether they were sprang from the same stock as did my grandfather. My old schoolmaster, Mr. Kenrick, always wrote my name Jennings.

My dear father was a man of singular prudence, industry, and economy. He had not much learning; but his head was well stored with all kinds of useful knowledge, in reference to the things of this life. After our removal to the Beach Farm, we had our family worship every day. My father was, perhaps, the most regular in his attendance upon the public service and communion of the church of any person in the parish. For some years previous to his death, he was much attached to the Methodists; this attachment was brought about in the following manner.

Reading Mr. Nelson's Journal and Mr. Lowe's Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life, were a great means, under God, of producing a remarkable change in his temper and disposition: his views of spiritual subjects were now greatly improved; he was certainly a changed man some years previous to his dissolution. About this time he was appointed head church-warden of the parish of Frodsham; I did the laborious part of the duty for him. But I cannot forget with what pleasure he brought home the old book of Homilies which he found at the bottom of the church chest, in Saxon

print; these Homilies I frequently read to the family in the winter evenings, and they were a happy means of confirming my father in the truths of our holy religion: we afterwards bought a new book of Homilies for the parish, and chained it up in a public place in the church, where it was read and consulted almost every Sunday.

My dear parent took great delight in visiting his children, and still greater pleasure in beholding their happiness and prosperity. I had been married about eight months before his dissolution, and he never failed to visit me every week after my marriage; the week previous to his death he came twice. Another circumstance I ought to mention, which shows the happy state of mind that my father enjoyed before his death. My brother had a lovely child, a boy about four years of age; this boy was a great favourite of his grandfather, they took their walks together to look at the fields, or fetch the cows; the sweet little fellow fell sick and died rather suddenly, his grandfather was with him on the mournful event, but we were astonished at the benignity and sweet peace of mind which my father enjoyed after the circumstance.

I was with him in his last moments, and Jacob like, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.

His funeral sermon was preached in our chapel at Norley, by his son-in-law, Mr. Gardner, for whom he entertained a great regard.

2. MR. GARDNER, BROTHER-IN-LAW OF THE AUTHOR.

I shall now speak of my dear brother-in-law, Mr. John Gardner, to whom I have had occasion, more than

once to allude, in the course of this narrative, whose memory is dear to me, and to whom I lie under infinite obligations, as he was the principal means under God of bringing about my conversion, and subsequently promoting my spiritual welfare. In early life, he was a man of the world, fond of gay company and of the vain amusements too common in our Christian country, although, even then, he was by no means openly immoral. When he was about 25 years old, he paid his addresses to the eldest of my sisters then living. But sometime previous to their marriage, as he was one day riding very briskly down Spittle Hill near Middlewich, his horse stumbled, and he was thrown off; in his fall, the cup of his knee sustained so severe a fracture, as to confine him to his bed or room for many weeks. This time of affliction and abstraction from worldly occupations and enjoyments, was, with him, a season of serious reflection and great searching of heart. It pleased God also, who had great and gracious purposes to answer in and by this his prisoner, to put it into the heart of Mr. James Woolridge, a pious neighbour of his, to visit him in his affliction; nor was his labour in vain, for, like another Ananias, he succeeded in directing the sick soul to that good Physician who heals the broken in heart, and gives medicine to cure their spiritual maladies.

From this time, Mr. Gardner was a new man, old things had passed away, behold, all things were become new! It now became a serious consideration with him whether he should proceed or recede in his acquaintance

with my sister. Many letters passed between them at this time on spiritual subjects, and he sent her several books on the all-important subject of personal religion. Nor was it labour in vain, for before their marriage took place, my sister became a decidedly religious character. Being thus made a heir together with him of the hope of eternal life, she was indeed in every sense of the term, a help meet for her husband, and in every relation of life as a wife, a mother, and a neighbour, she was a pattern of Christian contentment and domestic prudence : but of her more hereafter.

I am not certain whether it was before his marriage or immediately after that event, that Mr. Gardner commenced his labour as a local preacher among the Methodists. Sometimes he kept a small horse on purpose to convey him to his appointments, at other times he walked to them. Wrexham and Caergwre on the Welsh side, Norley, Frodsham, and Broomhall, on the Cheshire side, and the intermediate places formed the extensive field, which, in conjunction with his brethren, the itinerant and local preachers of the Chester circuit, he laboured to cultivate for the glory of the great husbandman. But far distant as were the extremities of his sphere of labour from Tattenhall, the place of his residence, he usually returned home on the Sabbath evening after preaching.

As soon as Mr. Gardner had finished the first sermon he had preached at Wrexham, he gave notice to his audience of his intention (God willing) to preach there again on that day fortnight. Immediately, a person in the assembly replied, "but I will prevent that." Awful,

however, to relate, before the appointed time arrived, this man was in his grave! This incident furnishes another striking proof that there is no counsel against the Lord.

Mr. Gardner was universally respected as far as he was known, and his memory is still dear to his few surviving friends. For some years after his marriage he lived in very easy circumstances, upon his own estate. But when he had scarce passed the meridian of life, one wave of trouble after another came upon him, until they well nigh overwhelmed him, and had he not possessed one of the best of constitutions, he certainly must have sunk under the weight of the accumulated difficulties through which he was called to pass into an early grave. I have frequently heard him say, that about this time, his happiest hours were those he spent on the Sabbath, in publishing the gospel of the grace of God. On these hallowed occasions he was enabled to forget his cares and sorrows, and to lose sight of the perplexing concerns of this fleeting life, amid the far nobler and more interesting realities which are seen only by men of faith, and which are enduring and eternal. Nor was he without seals to his ministry. Many persons in different parts of his native county, as well as on the borders of the Principality, received great spiritual good under his word. Among the number of these his living epistles, was one who laboured for many years with acceptance and usefulness as a travelling preacher in our connexion, the Rev. Daniel Jackson. Under a sermon preached by Mr. Gardner, in the place of a local preacher of inferior and somewhat eccentric

talents, from which Mr. Jackson expected to derive some merriment, he was deeply convinced of his sin and danger; ever after which, to his dying day, he acknowledged Mr. G. as his spiritual father. Both these good men, father and son in Christ, have some years ago, met and recognized each other in the heaven of God.

A.D. 1787, Mr. Gardner removed with his family to Birmingham, where he continued to discharge the duties of a local preacher for many years. Here, when he had attained to his three score years and ten, he sank into a lethargy, by which comparatively easy means, it pleased the great Master to remove his faithful servant from a suffering to a reigning church. Towards the last he could scarce sit five minutes at a time, but he fell asleep, and in one of his peaceful slumbers it was that, almost unperceived by those around him, "the weary wheels of life stood still." Thus departed this life on the 1st of January, 1808, one to whom those words of the psalmist are most appropriate—"Mark the perfect man and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace." As a tribute to departed worth two funeral sermons were preached for him, in the Methodist chapels at Birmingham, by Mr. John Nelson, the grandson of the celebrated John Nelson, of Binton, and himself of blessed memory.

To describe the character of Mr. Gardner, so as to do it justice, is a task, for the performance of which I feel myself quite inadequate. He was one of the most agreeable travelling companions in the world, his conversation was always entertaining, and frequently very

profitable, nor was there ought about him that was morose or melancholy. After he became serious, he cultivated his naturally vigorous and intelligent mind by reading and meditation. He had collected a good library, in which were stored the valuable Commentaries of Matthew Henry and Poole, the Christian Directory, and most of the theological writings of the eminent Richard Baxter, the choice productions of several of the Puritan divines, and the works of our venerable founder, which he purchased as they issued from the press. He was accustomed to search the various book stalls in Chester, in quest of rare and valuable authors.

In addition to his attainments in theology, he had a tolerable acquaintance with geography—a science which he deemed essential even to the reading of a newspaper so as to understand it. He had a good selection of maps, in the study of which he found much pleasure.

Although Mr. Gardner was decided and unwavering in his attachment to the doctrines and discipline of Methodism, yet he had no sectarian feeling of hostility towards the venerable establishment of our country. When he had the opportunity, he attended with pleasure the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Basnett, of Handley, an evangelical clergyman; and occasionally he heard the Rev. Mr. De Courcy, of Shrewsbury, of whom I have heard him speak in the highest terms of approbation.

His own public discourses were selected and prepared with great judgment and care, and were admirably well timed. He preached both experimentally and practically, well knowing that the duties of our holy religion

naturally arise out of its doctrines, and that there is an inseparable connection between a new heart and a holy life. At times he would so deal out the thunders of Mount Sinai, and wield the two edged sword of the spirit, as powerfully to awaken and alarm the sinner's slumbering conscience. But his chief talent lay in comforting Zion's mourners. He was indeed a son of consolation, and by him God spake peace to many a labouring conscience. As a speaker, his cadences were pathetic, his measures melting. In the prime of life particularly, he generally succeeded in arresting the attention of the listening multitude whom he addressed.

He also possessed a fine voice, and understood the art of singing. Oft have I, delighted and profited, listened to his heart cheering discourses, until I have almost involuntarily exclaimed, "Lord, it is good for me to be here!" Although now more than half a century has elapsed since those precious opportunities, yet, still the vivid recollection is present with me, and would make me sad indeed that they are gone, were it not for the pleasing prospect I have, that I shall shortly enjoy still more delightful communion with my dear brother, father, and friend, in the world of light.

Mr. Gardner's gift in prayer was impressive, consolatory, and well adapted to prepare the mind for the reception of divine truth. In his public addresses to the throne of grace, there was a happy combination of confession, supplication, intercession, and thanksgiving. He was likewise remarkably neat and methodical in all his matters. In his farm, his warehouse, his library, he had a place for every thing, and every thing in its

place. Indeed, taking him altogether, it may be safely said, that the respectable body to which he belonged, the body of Wesleyan local preachers, has but seldom produced his equal, scarce ever his superior.

3. MRS. GARDNER, THE AUTHOR'S SISTER.

My beloved sister, Mrs. Gardner, left a good savour of grace behind her wherever she resided ; while she remained under her father's roof she was very useful to him as a kind of amanuensis, being 12 or 13 years older than his sons ; she wrote his letters and kept his accounts. Immediately after her conversion, which, as has been observed in the account of her husband, took place previous to her marriage, she joined the Methodist society, of which she continued a consistent and respected member for more than 50 years. She was a remarkable example of conjugal affection, maternal care, and domestic diligence ; I have been singularly gratified in witnessing visits which have been paid her by some of her old female servants, who had lived under her hospitable roof for many years, and their transports of joy in seeing their old mistress again. The religion of the Bible invariably promotes the happiness of domestic life ; so it was in her house. She was much attached to the venerable Joseph Benson, who during the time he spent in Birmingham was a frequent visitor at her house. They were of about equal standing in the school of the Redeemer. Some of our junior preachers also thought it a honour to share her friendship and esteem.

Mrs. Gardner had a generous and sympathetic soul,

and was truly liberal as far as her circumstances would permit. When she heard the case of any distressed family or poor destitute widow, she would apply to her richer neighbours, by whom she was much respected, and obtain seasonable supplies for them. She was intimately acquainted with the good William Taylor, who, though he occupied the humble station of a milkman, yet stood unequalled in the town of Birmingham in point of assiduity and success in visiting the sick and dying, and who was followed to his grave by upwards of five hundred persons, among whom were most of the dissenting ministers in the town. He was appointed to seek out the abodes and retreats of wretchedness, then brought his report to her; she immediately turned out to solicit pecuniary aid, which having obtained she transmitted it through him to the sufferers. Thus did they jointly bring upon themselves the blessings of him that was ready to perish; and cause the widow's heart to leap for joy; so laying up for themselves in store a good foundation against the time to come, that they might obtain eternal life.

This mother in Israel lived to an advanced age, and then in her eightieth year, and in the month of December, 1816, she fell asleep in Jesus. Her earthly remains repose in the same grave with those of her beloved husband, in the burying ground of St. Mary's, Birmingham; in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to life eternal.

4. MRS. ELIZABETH JANION.

My first wife, Mrs. E. Janion, died in the Lord, a few hours after the birth of her fifth child. For piety

towards God, good will and benevolence towards men, for industry, frugality, and economy, she had few equals. She left such an example behind her, of conjugal affection and fidelity and parental goodness, as her children and grandchildren need not be ashamed of.

5. MR. CHARLES NEVILL.

My dear and much respected sister NEVILL and her husband deserve to have their names handed down to posterity, on account of their long and unwavering attachment to the cause of God. Mr. Nevill joined the Methodist Society early in life; and being bold and courageous, he never shrank from what he judged to be his duty, when the cause of truth called for his support. He lived many years in Birmingham, an ornament to his Christian profession. Afterwards, he was invited to superintend a large copper concern in Swansea, for a company of the Birmingham manufacturers. His last remove was to Llanelly, a small seaport town in South Wales, where, with the assistance of some Cornish gentlemen, he built and established extensive copper works. Here also, he was greatly beloved, on account of his faithful discharge of every relative and religious duty. He was blessed with a strong and vigorous understanding, which he cultivated with great propriety and success. He always took his share in familiar and useful conversation. He knew how to blend a degree of inflexibility with moderation and complacency. I have often been delighted with his shrewd remarks on men and things. He had, likewise, a deal of good-nature and courtesy about him. He

died comparatively young, considering his excellent constitution and regular habit of living, being not more than sixty years of age when he exchanged mortality for life.

6. MRS. NEVILL

Became decidedly religious before she was thirty years of age. About this time she had a lingering fit of sickness, which brought her to the gates of the grave. But prayer was made on her behalf; Heaven heard and answered, and from that hour she began to recover. After she had buried her first husband, she came to live with my mother as a nurse and companion. After her second marriage, she became truly a helpmeet to Mr. Nevill, in the government and tuition of his first children; and they loved and revered her as if she had been their own mother. She had only one son, the fruit of her second marriage. Her imperfections were lost in her many excellences and virtues; she laboured to cultivate in the minds of her family and associates habits of charity and benevolence; she taught them to make clothes and garments for the poor, and then would accompany them in the distribution of them, so that she still lives at Llanelly in the grateful recollection of many poor people, who tell of the garments she gave them, and who feel that in her they lost a friend. I have been told that I have not sufficiently portrayed the sterling worth of her character and the strength of her mind, which were uniformly displayed in Christian opposition to the vanities and follies of the world; and by her excellent maxims, she endeavoured to imprint the same sentiments on the

young people. She was highly respected at Birmingham, Swansea, and Llanelly. She loved good people of all denominations, and was of an open-hearted and generous disposition, free from bigotry, though she knew how to discriminate the characters of mankind. Her death was sudden and unexpected. She had been visiting her beloved son's family at the Field-house; on her road home, having to cross a railway, her feet slipped and she fell; just at that moment a waggon was passing, and it ran over her. She was taken up alive, but only survived a few hours.

“How many fall as sudden, not as safe.

A soul prepared needs no delays;

The summons comes, the saint obeys.

Swift was her race, and short the road;

She closed her eyes, and saw her God.”

7, 8, 9. MRS. PHILLIS PUGH, MRS. HANNAH PUGH, AND
MRS. MARY DUDLESTON.

I shall now make mention of my three beloved daughters, Phillis, Hannah, and Mary, each of whom made a good end. Phillis and Mary were early in life awakened to a sense of their sin and danger and converted to God. They enjoyed the comforts of religion, and gave satisfactory proof of a work of grace in their hearts, in a holy life and conversation.

Hannah had serious impressions almost from her infancy. She enjoyed those advantages when a child which few children do. Her good aunt, now Mrs. Denton, took great pains with my children; when Hannah was not more than six or seven years old, she used to teach them their lessons, and made a constant

practice of praying with them once or twice a-day, when they came down to dinner and supper. The gracious impressions which she then received no doubt laid the foundation for that early piety, the power of which was so peculiarly manifested in her riper years. Her aunt continued with us four years at least, which was of great advantage to her, both in respect of her morals and her learning. When she was about twelve years old, her father placed her in the Misses Williams' shop at Chester. Here she also enjoyed the advantages of family worship daily, and witnessed bright examples of Christianity in its native beauty and simplicity. But as she was always fond of home, and could not reconcile her mind to business, she returned home, where she had the privilege of hearing the word of God frequently, and meeting in class, in our own house. She would often shed tears when her father spoke to her about the value of time, the worth of her soul, the preciousness of the Redeemer, the absolute necessity of making her peace with God, and securing a title to eternal felicity. But it does not appear that she made a believing closure with the Redeemer until after her marriage and removal to Winsford. Her sister, Mary, had paid us a visit, in which she found the pearl of great price—the pardon of sin and reconciliation to God, through the blood of the Covenant. This made such an impression on the mind of Haunah, that she began, with great earnestness, to seek the same blessing. It pleased God greatly to bless to her a sermon preached by her dear friend, Mr. T. Vernon, from these words, “Do ye now believe.” Under this

discourse, that faith was bestowed on her whereby she was enabled to embrace the Lord Jesus as her present Saviour. And her happy soul was ready to cry out to all around her, "Come, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul." At this time, her health, likewise, seemed to be established; and after the birth of her second child, her constitution, which was naturally tender, appeared to be much improved, so that her husband, father, and friends, promised themselves long enjoyment of her amiable company and conversation. But the ways of Providence are inscrutable, they are past finding out! A week after her confinement, she was seized with cold shiverings, and fell into a decline. In this state she continued a patient sufferer for several months; but when she came to grapple with her last enemy, she triumphed over all her weaknesses, and put off the poor body with as much content as a poor man just come to an estate puts off his tattered clothes to put on gorgeous apparel. They all ended well. Thanks be to God.

There was something very interesting in the death of my dear Mary Dudleston. Just before she departed, she began to repeat her favourite hymn—

"I'll praise my Maker while I have breath,
And when my voice is lost in death"—

But before she could get through one verse, she ceased to breathe; and, as her husband said, went to finish her song in the world of glory.

10. MR. JOHN JANION TURNER.

My beloved grandson, John J. Turner, died at Tewkesbury, in the Gloucester Circuit, August the 29th,

1827, in the 18th year of his age. Although he was born blind, yet he was a prodigy for mind, memory, and pulpit talents. When he was very young he discovered strong indications for early piety; when only two years of age he said to his mother, "Mother I will be a preacher," "Will you my dear," she said, "and what will you preach about?" he replied, "about Jesus Christ." As soon as his understanding began to open, he used to hire his sisters to read for him; when he had any little present of fruit or cakes, he has said, which of you will read the most chapters out of the Old or New Testament. When very young he esteemed no book like the Bible; his mother likewise read portions unto him out of the Holy Scriptures daily. By these means, and also by frequent attendance on the means of grace, either at the Church, or among the Dissenters, or with the Methodists, and being blessed with a retentive memory, the Scriptures became quite familiar to him. Likewise, by the time he was 14 or 15 years of age, he became so accustomed to our hymn book, that out of 500 hymns, he could repeat more than half, and he told us he could sing 6 or 700 tunes.

When he was six or seven years of age it was his daily practice about 10 o'clock in the morning, to sing a hymn, repeat a short prayer, then take his text, and give the family a sermon, so conclude with singing and prayer.

On the death of our beloved monarch, George III. he gave the family an oration or funeral sermon for his majesty, and the person who heard him and told us

this circumstance, said that he acquitted himself in an extraordinary manner. In a letter which he wrote to me concerning his christian experience, he says, that about the eleventh year of his age, he was deeply convinced of the total depravity of his nature, and had powerful conviction of his fallen state, and that the best heart must undergo a divine change or be excluded glory. In private and in public he sought the Lord with many tears, and pleaded hard for mercy. One sabbath he went to chapel as usual, and under a sermon by a local preacher, looking up through Jesus, God graciously surprised him with his mercy, and blessed him with a sense of the remission of his sins. The love of God was shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him.

11, 12, 13. MISSES ANN, HANNAH, AND MARY JANION.

I have always considered my brother's three daughters, my beloved nieces, Ann, Hannah, and Mary Janion, as part of my family. I shall, therefore, notice each of their characters briefly. My dear niece, Miss Ann Janion, died young, not being more than 18 years of age, when she quitted this vale of mortality. She had sense above her years; the troubles that happened in her family made her an old woman betimes. She loved her uncle and aunt Janion greatly, and was deservedly beloved by them. Had she enjoyed the benefits of Christian communion, she would have made a bright ornament in the church of Christ. Those beautiful lines of Dr. Young were strikingly applicable to her:—

“She was young as beautiful, and soft as young,
And gay as soft, and innocent as gay;
She sparkled, was exhaled, and went to heaven.”

My dear niece, Miss Hannah Janion, had much good sense, and was a most prudent and excellent house-keeper. She was converted to God, joined the Methodist Society, was a great ornament to her Christian profession, and died in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life.

My dear niece, Miss Mary Janion, was best known in the religious world. She gave her heart to God in early life, and greatly improved and cultivated her mind by reading, conversation, and prayer. She was an inmate in Dr. Townley's house a considerable time, where she enjoyed great opportunities of acquiring spiritual and intellectual knowledge; and under his tuition, she laid in such a stock of wisdom as rendered her a very useful and agreeable companion. When her amiable brother, Mr. Robert Janion, fell sick, and was obliged to give up his shop and business in Chester, they took a house in Runcorn, for the benefit of the air and salt water bathing. Here they nursed him with the greatest care and tenderness, until he was removed to a better world. This dear young man lamented to me, with many tears, the want of early piety. "Alas!" he said, "If I had had some one to take me by the hand, and lead me in wisdom's ways, I should not have gone astray as I have done." And yet he had very few foibles and imperfections. Mr. Robert Brittain, his master, told me that he was one of the best apprentices that ever came into his shop. I bless God, I believe that he died in peace. After his decease, the two sisters continued together at Runcorn some years, and were very useful to the souls and bodies of numbers

of their fellow-creatures. They were greatly respected by a large circle of acquaintances, chiefly among religious people. Mary had a good class of female friends, of whom she was the leader. Alas, for us, the firmest constitutions cannot arrest the stroke of death. Hannah died and was brought to her long home when she about 39 years of age.

In a little while, Mary thought she was in the wrong place. She gave up her house and class, and went to live with a female friend in Sutton. Here it was that reason forsook her throne. Her friends carried her to Bradley Orchard, where they attended her with the greatest care and diligence. As soon as I heard of her calamity, I flew to her assistance. But, alas! it was all over. At this interview, how were my feelings harrowed up, by the mournful sight of my dear niece. When I got home, I said to our people, Mary will not continue long in this state. She lingered about a fortnight, and then went to the land where the weary are at rest. A long elegy was written on her death by a friend of ours.

14. MRS. LEWIS, SEN.

My dear and valuable friend, Mrs. Lewis, formerly of Helsby, and mother to Mr. Lewis, of Gadscroft, must not be forgotten in my list of Christian worthies. She was well qualified by the Almighty for the government of her large family of ten children, most of them small, with which she was left a widow. She governed her household with great prudence and discretion. She had four sons and six daughters, all of whom married respectably. Such another family,

perhaps, will not be found in the county ; most of them were converted to God, and made a good end. Mrs. Lewis died in hope of eternal life. I attended her funeral, and spoke of her good conversation and character.

15. MR. THOMAS LEWIS

Of Netherton, son of Mrs. Lewis, obtained a sense of religion in his youth ; afterwards, he fell into a back-sliding state ; but he recovered himself out of the snare of the devil, and made a good end. He gave the Methodists an old barn in Frodsham, which they fitted up for a place of public worship.

16. MRS. HANNAH DODD.

My much respected friend, Mrs. Hannah Dodd, of Preston-on-the-Hill, was an original Methodist, and was eminently endowed with modesty, humility, and every Christian virtue that adorns the female character. She met in my class ten or fifteen years before her decease. Mr. John Booth preached her funeral sermon ; afterwards I spoke a few words respecting the depth of her piety and devotedness to God.

17, 18, 19. MRS. ALICE PUGH, MRS. RANGLES, MRS. NODEN.

I shall now make mention of three of the Lewis's family, namely, Mrs. Pugh, Mrs. Randles, and Mrs. Nodin,—three women who have seldom been excelled in any age of the world. They all had good Christian experience, and adorned their profession by a holy life and conversation. It would be difficult to ascertain which of them led the way in their Christian warfare. Mrs. Pugh had most of a public spirit ; she

visited the sick, invited people to hear sermons, and bore her testimony for God in love-feasts and class meetings. In drawing Mrs. Alice Pugh's character, we know not which to admire most—her fervent zeal and unbounded charity, her inflexible attachment to Methodism, believing it to be the cause of Heaven—or her prudent and circumspect behaviour in her house and family. “The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good, and not evil, all the days of her life.” When I call to mind the public meetings which were held at the New Pale about forty years ago, especially our love-feasts, which came round once or twice in the year, I think I am got back to the primitive ages of Christianity, when simplicity and godly sincerity occupied every bosom. We were of one heart and one soul, and only love inspired the whole. The influence of these love-feasts spread as far as Manchester and Bolton, and our friends came from every quarter. Such crowds came from the neighbouring villages, that we were obliged at times to hold the love-feasts out of doors, or in some of the out-buildings; and great were our rejoicings on those occasions. Mrs. Pugh had not attained her 60th year when she exchanged mortality for life.

Nor was Mrs. Randles behind her elder sister, either in piety towards God or in the excellent management of her household affairs. She had but a thorny path all the time of her first husband. Mr. Randles knew how to appreciate her worth, and loved and respected her almost to adoration; yet she was not lifted up by

vanity nor self-applause, but held on the even tenor of her way. If she excelled most of her contemporaries, it was in the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which, in the sight of God, is of great price. While she lived at Warrington, she met a class for a few years. She was a good neighbour, a faithful and tender-hearted friend, and a pious and devoted Christian. She died at Chester when she was about sixty years of age, greatly beloved by all her acquaintance.

Mrs. Noden was certainly one of the excellent of the earth; though youngest of Mr. Lewis's daughters, yet she was not exceeded by any in the graces which adorn the female character. She was converted to God about three years before her decease; from the time of her conversion, she constantly made advances in the divine life. I visited her a few days before her death, and was a witness of the peace and tranquillity with which a Christian can meet the last enemy. She was lovely in life, and her latter end was glorious.

20. MRS. ELIZABETH HUXLEY.

I shall now speak of my dear and highly respected aunt, Mrs. Elizabeth Huxley, whose praise is in all the churches. She was early converted to God; and after a long night of deep contrition and holy mourning, she obtained mercy from the Lord; she immediately relinquished the gay and fashionable world, and gave her heart to Heaven. She was a member of our society for fifty years. In the commencement of her religious course, she was greatly assisted by an uncle, Mr. James Huxley, who may be considered as a pillar in the house

of the Lord; he had no family except the poor and the needy, the widow, and the orphan, who shared with him his yearly income, from which he made no saving. These two greatly helped me in gathering the society at Norley, and building the chapel there. Mr. James Huxley, at his decease, left 200*l.* to be distributed among the poor, as his trustee should judge necessary. After the death of her husband, Mrs. Huxley had preaching and class-meetings in her own house during many years: though left in very moderate circumstances, yet, by wise management and economy, she had always plenty about her, never took any thing for the preachers' board, and sometimes had the quarter days kept at her house. Her end was peace and assurance for ever.

21. MRS. ESTHER WETTENHALL

Soon followed her beloved neighbour, Mrs. Nodin. She was also like the prudent wife mentioned by Solomon, for she was adorned with the graces of the Holy Spirit, and died well. Our old friend, Mr. William Young, preached her funeral sermon.

22. MR. WILLIAM WILKINSON.

My dear and much respected neighbour, Mr. Wm. Wilkinson, was older than me, but I believe we were both converted to God much about the same time (i. e. 1770). He met in my class many years, had a most extraordinary gift in prayer, and was very useful among his poor neighbours. He greatly improved his mind by reading, meditation, and prayer. His friends say that he wrote a Commentary on the Canticles or Solomon's Song, a large folio volume, but by some means

it was lost or destroyed. I may say his whole life was a commentary on the Holy Scriptures. Such a man for industry and economy, for patience and moderation, I shall never look upon again. He acquired a considerable property, by dint of application, toil, and labour; he saw all his children married and settled in life; then laid by his spiritual armour, and went to his great reward, in the 87th year of his age. His life may properly be divided into three stages. For thirty years, in the early part of his Christian course, he walked in the clear sunshine of the favour and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. He used to say, I go from one paradise to another: in this stage, his happy soul was borne aloft as on eagles' wings; and such was the fervour of his devotion, that he appeared like an inhabitant of the celestial world; and while at the church or sacrament, his very countenance indicated the peace which reigned within. Afterwards, for ten years, he got into a low, mournful, and desponding state. I think this arose partly from inward conflict, and partly from outward exercises. Alas! how have I heard him mourn the absence of his God. He once came to me, in the bitterness of his soul, and begged I would pray for him; I had more need that he should pray for me; however, I said to him, "My dear neighbour, you will never die in this condition; though clouds and darkness are round about the Almighty, yet judgment and justice are the habitation of his throne. He never did, nor ever will do any wrong to any of his creatures; you hate sin, you love the ways and people of God; therefore, take encouragement and hope in the Lord,

for with the Lord there is mercy, and with our God there is plenteous redemption. Encourage yourself in the Lord, for you shall see better days." And it was so ; for the last ten years of the life of this good man were glorious and happy above many of his fellow-travellers. His last illness was short and not painful ; his happy spirit frequently broke out in rapturous longings for the glory that awaited him. At one time, he continued seven or eight hours in uninterrupted prayer and thanksgiving to Heaven. He was the loveliest corpse (of any old man) that ever I beheld : his very countenance had received the stamp of his peaceful and happy soul.

23. THE REV. PHILIP OLIVER.

How delightful a task it would be to gather up a few fragments of the life and labours of that amiable man, the Rev. Philip Oliver, and how profitable it would be to shew by what means he attained to that eminent degree of piety and usefulness which so adorned his public character and the greatest part of his contracted life.

It cannot be expected that we can say much of his childhood and youth ; neither am I certain at which of our colleges or halls he was educated at ; but as soon as he was ordained to the ministerial office, he officiated at Churton Heath Chapel for a few years ; he then removed to Birmingham, to assist the Rev. E. Burn, at St. Mary's. One of my neighbours remembers his farewell sermon at Churton Heath. At Birmingham, he had full scope for his talents and abilities. At this time, Mr. Burns had one of the largest congregations

of any place of worship in that populous town. I have occasionally attended at St. Mary's, and witnessed how respectable and numerous the audience were. This church, built in the octagon form and galleried round, will seat 800 or 1000 people comfortably, and it was usually filled two or three times every Lord's-day. It is well known that Mr. Oliver's constitution was tender and delicate, which I suppose was the reason why he only continued at Birmingham little more than two years; when he returned home to his mother, now become a widow lady, who lived in her own house at Boughton. Here, notwithstanding his ill state of health, he could not think of being idle. He therefore fitted up two or three bays of some out-houses with benches and a pulpit, as a place for public worship on Sunday, and invited his neighbours to join with him in reading the service of the Church of England, when he occasionally gave an exhortation or short sermon. It was not long before his place became too strait for the numbers who attended; and having a stable at one end and a coach-house at the other, he threw them both down to make room for them. The people now flocked to Boughton, to hear the glad tidings of salvation through a crucified Redeemer, so that in a little time these places became too narrow for the crowds that came. Mr. Oliver, therefore, at his own expence, threw down the wall opposite the pulpit, and made a new addition to his former building out of his garden, of six or eight yards square, and fitted it up with forms and benches; for I know not whether there was more than one pew in the whole building, and that was to

accommodate his aged mother, and his brother, who sometimes attended from Hoole-hall. But Mr. Oliver was not without opposition and persecution from those who ought rather to have assisted him in so good a work. However, this did not deter him from going straight forward in the way which Divine Providence had pointed out to him ; and seeing the multitudes who attended his ministry, many of whom came from Christleton, Waverton, Barrow, and even Tarvin, five miles distant, so that there was no room for them to sit down, he, last of all, fitted up a gallery over that part which he had built out of his garden. It was about this time that I first heard him in Boughton, and being rather late, it was with difficulty that a friend and myself got a seat ; but we were abundantly repaid by the divine truths which we heard so well delivered from the pulpit. Nor can I forget the laconic remark which the old man at the toll-bar made to us, when we enquired how his neighbour, the Rev. Philip Oliver, came on, he replied, "He cannot but do well ; he is sure to get on, for he lays at sin as if he were knocking down an ox." Such preaching is sure to have the desired effect ; it is by the hammer of God's holy word, that the rocky heart of sinners is broken to pieces. It was said of the heavenly minded martyr, John Bradford, that in his preaching, he sharply reprov'd sin, sweetly preached Christ Jesus the Lord, and earnestly exhorted to a holy life. These are the subjects which ought to occupy every pulpit in the kingdom ; or, as the Rev. Matthew Henry has them in other words, "The Holy Scriptures set forth these three things in an especial manner, first,

the humiliation of the sinner ; second, the exaltation of the Saviour ; and lastly, they teach that the man of God should be perfect, thoroughly furnished for every good work." Such was the preaching of this excellent man, and such was the doctrine that drew such crowds to Boughton every Lord's-day. And no wonder ; for what is the chaff to the wheat ? saith the Lord. "Is not my word as a fire and as a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces ?" About this time, Mr. Blythe came from Tarvin almost every Sunday, to hear Mr. Oliver, and brought his daughter, Mrs. Powell, along with him, in his chaise and pair. He likewise invited Mr. Oliver to give them a sermon now and then at Tarvin. For this purpose, he fitted up some out-building with forms and a moveable pulpit. But the place would scarcely accommodate half the people who attended. I heard the first sermon that he preached there ; it was a master-piece of oratory : his design was to remove the deep-rooted prejudice and bigotry from the minds of the Tarvin people. That sermon was worth thousands of gold and silver, in rooting up those noxious weeds of intolerance and bigotry which have sprung up in the church and destroyed its thousands and tens of thousands.

I have inquired by what steps and by what means the Rev. P. Oliver arrived at that usefulness and celebrity which followed him both in his public and private life ; it may be answered, by the same steps and by the same means that every Christian man and woman has passed through, namely, repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ ; and the principal

means were earnest prayer and supplication to Heaven, with the hearing and reading God's holy word; it is thus we rise out of our fall, recover the favour and image of our Maker, and are made partakers of the witness of the Spirit, and get a meetness for our eternal inheritance.

It cannot be told what numbers were blessed under Mr. Oliver's ministry in the different places where he laboured. It was a pleasing sight to behold the people wedged together, and listening with the deepest attention to the gracious words that proceeded from his lips. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that publisheth peace, that bringeth glad tidings of good things."

In the year 1800 (I think) Mr. Oliver's delicate constitution sunk beneath the pressure of his intense and pious labours. He died, as he lived, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and was interred at St. John's, Chester, in his 37th year. The attendance at the funeral of this excellent Christian minister was sufficiently indicative of the esteem in which he was universally held. Thousands from all parts of the city and the surrounding villages crowded together, to witness his interment, and shew their last mournful testimony to his worth and their own affection. The Rev. Thos. Charles, of Bala, who had long been intimately acquainted with Mr. Oliver in the bonds of Christian fellowship, preached his funeral sermon at the chapel at Boughton, from Rev. iii. 3, "Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent." It is hardly needful to say, that the place was

crowded to excess, or that a most pathetic discourse should be listened to by Mr. Oliver's flock, without producing mingled impressions of mournful sorrow and exquisite delight.

A female of Mr. Oliver's congregation thus feelingly described his funeral :—"The remains of our dear pastor were laid in the earth early this morning, attended by a great concourse of people, and many real mourners. Oh! my dear, dear pastor, how hardly do I give thee up. But, my dearest, tenderest Saviour, help me to remember, that all creatures are and can be to me only what thou art pleased to make them. Oh! be graciously pleased to help me to submit with patient resignation to thy holy will. Grievous as the stroke is, yet, O Lord, I believe I shall find one day that it was done in infinite wisdom. We poor short-sighted mortals are very unfit judges of what is best for us. How hard do I find it now, in the time of trial, to say, 'Father, not my will, but thine be done.' Oh! my Lord and Saviour, be pleased, in the multitude of thy tender mercies, to ward from me this stroke, and to pardon this my grief for my dear departed pastor, if I have in thy most pure sight, if I have in any measure sinfully indulged it."

24. MR. GEORGE WALKER.

I must not pass over my valuable friend and acquaintance, Mr. George Walker, of the Hill. He had seen much of high life, having lived many years as head servant or steward in some gentlemen's families, although he had a handsome estate of his own near Tar-

porley. He had a generous soul, great politeness, and good breeding, and was very useful among us as a local preacher. His end was not triumphant, but he said that he had sweet peace and tranquillity of soul in the prospect of death and eternity.

25. MRS. HANNAH PRITCHARD.

Our kind friend and neighbour, Mrs. Hannah Pritchard died as happy in the Lord as any person I ever visited; but she lived well, and that is the way to die well. I frequently called to pray with her about a month before her death, and the poor chamber where the good woman met her fate was privileged above the common walk of virtuous life, fast on the verge of heaven. We often found it a little Bethel to our souls. At her funeral, we sung a hymn or two as we walked up Tarvin Street, which so offended the Vicar, that he ordered the constables to take us up, but the townspeople thought otherwise. Mr. Blythe, one of the principal inhabitants, said he should like to be buried in this way; and so it happened, a hymn being sung before the corpse at his funeral.

26. MISS MARY HARBRIDGE.

Our dear young neighbour, Miss Mary Harbridge, was converted to God when only fourteen years of age: she was a burning and a shining light; she had joined the society at Mouldsworth a little while previous to her conversion, and met in my class before she was 15 years old. She established family worship in the house, and although she had no little opposition from her elder

sisters, yet she persevered until within a few weeks of her decease. She left a large bundle of papers behind her, which her mother found after her death, and brought them to me. The greater part of them contained her diary, in which she had related, in a very minute manner, the dealings of God with her soul. She had also some genius for poetry, and has composed many pieces on different subjects, chiefly religious, one of which is the following :—

“ Have you seen the dear Jesus who came from above,
The God whom I worship, the friend that I love?
He is comely and glorious, surpassing degree;
He hath won all my heart, and yet I am quite free.”

Mr. Lessey, sen. who was our superintendent at that time, thought it proper to arrange and methodise her papers, some of which were published in a small pamphlet. She died, as she had lived, at peace with God and all mankind. Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like hers. Amen.

27. MRS. PARR,

Another of our neighbours, went to her long home about the same time, i.e. 1803. Her conversion was sudden. As soon as I heard that she was likely to die, I went to render what assistance I could. I spoke plainly to her about the necessary preparations for another world, and I threw out broad hints that her case was very doubtful as to this life. She listened with deep attention to the friendly admonition. I went again once or twice the same week, still insisting on the necessity of regeneration and holiness of heart; I always

prayed with her on these occasions. On Sunday, my good wife and Mrs. Pugh paid her a friendly visit, and prayed with her. She likewise began to pray to God earnestly herself, and sometime on Sunday evening, she was in an agony of soul, and said to her friends, "Oh, what will become of me? I am going to die, and the door of heaven, the door of mercy is shut against me! What will become of me?" Then, in the bitterness of her soul, she cried out, "Save, Lord, or I perish." Her extremity was God's opportunity to save. His own right hand brought salvation to this poor, perishing, sinking creature. He cast all her sins behind His back, as a stone into the depth of the sea, never to be remembered against her. When I visited her on Monday evening, and enquired into the state of her soul, she answered, "Oh! Mr. Janion, I am happy now; God has brought heaven into my soul; he hath pardoned all my transgressions, and blotted out all my sins." This, I thought, was too good news to be true; I could not credit her testimony. I said to Mr. Parr, I think Mrs. Parr is light headed. "No, no," he replied, "she knows what she is talking about." Still I questioned her, and asked her how she had obtained this comfort to her soul; whether she had sincerely repented of all sins, and whether she had prayed earnestly? "Oh! Mr. Janion," said she, "I cried out for help." Then could I rejoice with her, and give thanks unto our God for the consolation; for never did I see so evident a change, so signal a proof of the goodness of God to any as I saw and heard in Mrs. Parr. She lived about a fortnight after this change took place,

witnessing a good confession, and then went to join the general assembly and church of the First-born whose names are written in heaven. I have been the more particular in relating Mrs. Parrs' experience, because I think it so clear an evidence of the power of divine grace, and of the truth of the doctrines which are taught among us.

28. MR. JONATHAN FOTHERGILL.

I shall now rehearse the Lord's dealings with my old and affectionate friend, Mr. Jonathan Fothergill, a very worthy and upright man. He had lived on a farm under Sir James Lowther, in Westmoreland, about the end of the American war; but the produce of the fields being very low, he could not pay his way. His landlord, however, was so satisfied with his integrity, that he ordered him to make the best of his effects, and pay as far as they would go: he likewise got him a place in the excise, and the poor man came with his cart and family of little children to Frodsham. Fothergill had buried his wife prior to leaving his native county. He had been among the Methodists some years before the time I speak of. While he continued at Frodsham, he buried his eldest daughter; she was a very hopeful girl, and made a good end: the Vicar gave us leave to sing one of our funeral hymns in the church before the corpse was interred. In a few years Mr. Fothergill removed to Liverpool, as watchman in the salt-works there; and as he had a good deal of spare time on his hands, he asked me to lend him £5. 5s. to begin the potatoe-trade. In a few years, he made

his five guineas into five hundred; and he never forgot his obligations for so small a boon. He lived to a good old age, greatly respected for his charity and benevolence to all men. He was a supporter of most of the good institutions of Liverpool.

29. MR. ROBERT PEARSON.

I shall now record the goodness of God to our highly respected neighbour, Mr. Robert Pearson, head surveyor of the forest of Delamere. He was of Scottish origin, though he had lived fifteen years in the south of England. The late Mr. Huskisson, one of his Majesty's ministers, sent him down to look after the planting and draining of the crown lands on the Forest. When he first came into Cheshire, he had very little religion. Our neighbour, Mr. John Lea, took great pains with him, with respect to his soul's concern, both by conversation and by inviting him to hear sermons. It was about the year 1822 that he became a decided character. He mourned over his former life and conversation; his convictions, though but of short duration, were deep and pungent; yea, he feared lest the heavy wrath of God should be poured out upon him without mixture; nor did he rest till he found redemption in the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of all his sins; and from that time he walked in the light of God's countenance continually. He never lost his first love, and his path was like that of the just, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. He therefore ripened fast for a better world. I used to say, Mr. Pearson has no drawbacks in his Christian warfare. He only lived

about two years after his conversion to God; but his end was glorious and triumphant. He died in great peace and tranquillity of soul.

30. MISS MARGARET PEARSON

Also came out of Scotland to Delamere Lodge, and died there a few months before her brother, Mr. Robt. Pearson. After she came to the Forest, she obtained great comfort to her soul; the fear of death was taken away, and she died in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to life eternal.

31. MASTER STEWARD.

Young Master Steward, nephew to Mr. Pearson, likewise came to live with his uncle at the Forest. He became the subject of divine influence early in life, was converted to God, and died in great tranquillity. He was a youth of very promising abilities, gave full proof of a real change of heart, and had a remarkable gift in prayer. He met with our people in class at Kelsall, as long as his health would admit; and had he been spared, would have made a useful member of civil and religious society. I attended all their funerals, prayed with, and gave an exhortation to the company which were present. I also visited several of the Briscoe's family at Kelsall, and I hope was made of some use to their souls.

32. MRS. ANN POWELL,

Of Tarvin, was our old and particular friend and acquaintance. Mrs. Janion had known her for fifty years,

when they associated together at school. In early life, she was fond of the fashionable amusements of the world, especially dress and company ; but the afflictions and trials which overtook her, brought her to a better mind, and she became a decidedly religious character when she was about thirty years of age. At the death of Mr. Powell she was left a widow with eight children, and Benjamin was born a little while after his father's decease ; but she had a good prop in her aged parent, Mr. Blythe. Mrs. Powell brought up her family with great prudence and discretion, and continued a widow until the day of her death. She was in principle and in heart a Wesleyan Methodist (I believe), but she was no bigot. She frequently worshipped at Church, with the Calvinists, or with Mr. Kilham's people. Few widows have conducted themselves or their households with greater propriety or decorum than Mrs. Powell. I knew her well for the last thirty years of her life, and I always considered her as one of the excellent of the earth. Her conduct and conversation would bear the strictest scrutiny and investigation. Her temper was mild and unassuming ; she had a great deal of what we call courtesy and good breeding. The Apostle says, "Be not careful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." Her house was an asylum and sanctuary for good people of all denominations. Mrs. Powell was fond of society ; but then it was the best sort of society, it was the excellent of the earth in whom she delighted.

33. MR. WILLIAMS.

The amiable deportment of my much respected friend, Mr. Williams, of Croxton Hall, whose house and heart were open for the reception and accommodation of all good people, deserves to be recorded. His first awakenings were at Coppenhall Church, under the resident minister. After his removal to Croxton Hall, he joined the Methodist Society at Middlewich, and was a very useful and exemplary member for many years. Mr. Williams and his family were well qualified for the management of a large concern, such as Croxton Farm was. He was the same regular and uniform Christian at home and abroad, in public and in private. I have frequently met with him on our quarter-days at Northwich. He was not a man of many words; yet, when he did speak, it was always to the purpose. He made a good end: the last time he went into the parlour, he said to a friend on whom he leaned, "I am going here to die."

34, 35. MR. AND MRS. RICHARD WILLIAMS.

There is a kind of mournful gratification (if I may be allowed the expression) in reviewing the character and excellencies of our deceased friends and acquaintances. We admire their piety; we are astonished at achievements; we trace the grace of God, which shone so conspicuously in their life and conversation. Indeed, there is one general character that belongs to all the people of God. Therefore, it is said, in the 128th Psalm, "Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord, that walketh in His ways,"

I had the happiness of knowing Mr. and Mrs. Williams, of the Rackery, the latter before her marriage. I have visited their dwelling-place and their farm ; I have witnessed the labour of their hands, the increase of their family, and their growing prosperity. Mr. Richard Williams's character stands high, both in the civil and religious world ; as a man, as a Christian, and as a farmer, he had few equals, and still fewer who excelled him. I have always considered Mr. Williams as one of the excellent of the earth ; his uniform and exemplary piety and conversation bear ample testimony of the grace of God reigning in the heart. He was a man of great good sense, and was well able to defend the cause and interest of Methodism and Christianity, in any company, against any opponent. His great industry and economy (for he knew not how to be idle,) the excellent management of his farm, the government of his family, and his exemplary piety, stamp a value upon the man and the Christian. Nor was Mrs. Williams a whit behind her good husband, either in good sense or piety towards God. Her family, three sons and six daughters, speak volumes in her praise. I doubt whether we should find such another family in two counties—all men and women of sterling piety and extraordinary abilities both for time and eternity. I have frequently said, that the world is greatly indebted to mothers for the most renowned characters that have been a blessing in their day and generation : not to mention the mother of Moses and the prophet Samuel, Mrs. Susannah Wesley (mother of the founder of Methodism) was a remarkable instance of wisdom and

discretion in the management of a large family, for she was the mother of nineteen children. Mrs. Lewis, also, mother of Mr. Lewis, of Gadscroft, of whom I can testify that she had the art of governing a family of ten children, all of whom did great credit to their excellent mother. So was Mrs. Williams's eldest sister, Miss Gardner, who got religion before the rest of the family. She married Mr. Samuel Faulkner, of the Potteries, where they lived a few years; then they removed to Whitehaven, where she passed through great exercises in family bereavements, which she bore with fortitude, and sustained the Christian character until she ended her days in the favour and friendship of Heaven. — Mrs. Williams spent the remnant of her days along with her daughter, Mrs. Bayley, at Ratcliff.

36, 37. MESSRS. JOHN AND WILLIAM WELLS,

Of Rushton and Tarporley, were among my acquaintance and fellow-travellers in the kingdom and patience of Jesus; they were classed among the Methodists in early life, and bore a fair and upright character the whole of their probationary state. The eldest, Mr. John Wells, was an acceptable local preacher among us many years, and came in his turn, about once a quarter, to our house at Mouldsworth, and so on to the New Pale or Ashton. As he was an early riser, I invited him always to come and take breakfast with us on the Sunday morning, which he commonly did, although the distance was ten miles, which he had to walk; for I never remember him riding, although his brother-in-law and sister had plenty of horses about

them, at whose house he worked four or five years. He was a truly pious, humble, devoted Christian, and a useful laborious preacher many years in the Methodist connection. I never heard the least objection to their moral character or experience. Mr. John Wells occupied a farm in the early part of his life; but by what means he was reduced I cannot now say. His death was rather sudden and premature, being not more than sixty years of age; but he died among his friends, at his sister's in Rushton.

38. MR. JOHN PICKTON.

My beloved and valuable friend and neighbour, Mr. John Pickton, of Norley, gave his heart to Heaven early in his youth. He and his brother Peter greatly assisted our people in establishing a Sunday school there, and afterwards he became an acceptable local preacher among us. His talents were above the common standard. I have heard him at times with great pleasure; and I doubt not his labours were made a blessing to many souls. He died when about 40 years of age. He lingered many months in great weakness; but he triumphed over all his enemies, and died happy in the Lord.

39. MRS. JANE BENTLEY.

Our dear and beloved neighbour, Mrs. Jane Bentley, became a subject of divine influence very early in life; while a teacher in the Sunday school at Kingsley, she was convinced of the necessity of experimental and practical piety; she was led to reflect on the reality

and importance of eternal things, which produced in her mind deep and lasting seriousness, and a fixed determination to devote herself to God. She immediately relinquished the fashionable world, and passed through great exercises of soul. It is said, the deeper the root, the higher the branches; and as Mrs. Bentley's repentance was genuine and sincere, so her consolations were abundant also. The whole of Mrs. Bentley's conduct gave full evidence of the depth of her piety; her temper and disposition were truly amiable; and her attendance on all the means of grace was constant and invariable, as long as her health would admit. The first time I visited her was in August last; my grandson Turner was with us; and Heaven made it a blessing to us all, especially to the sick. She was greatly comforted while we sang that hymn, "How happy are we who in Jesus agree," &c. On the 8th of November I spent a very comfortable hour with her; we sung those two excellent hymns, "Ye virgin souls, arise," and "None is like Jesus our God." I never saw so much of heaven on earth as I saw in Mrs. Bentley's countenance this evening. The closing scene drew near. I visited her three of her last days successively; she frequently called me her good father, and nurse Radley her good mother. She was quite sensible to the last. She now and then fixed her eyes on one corner of the room, as if she saw her guardian angel ready to conduct her happy spirit into the realms of bliss.

40. MR. JOHN REECE.

My much esteemed friend and acquaintance, Mr.

John Reece, late of Bruerton Park, whom I have known for upwards of sixty years, was a man of singular talents and good sense. He has left seven sons behind him, some of the finest men (take them one and all) in the county, as well as a most amiable widow, now in her 89th year. Since the death of Mr. Reece, she buried her excellent daughter, who, I fear, fell a sacrifice to her attention and long nursing of her very aged parents; but she has gone to that clime and kingdom that awaits the obedient and tender-hearted children of all denominations, who have thus nursed and attended their aged parents.

When Mr. John Reece, together with his two neighbours, Mr. Robert Dutton, of Brassey Green, and Mr. Thomas Boden, then of Hoofield Hall, afterwards of Pickforton, first joined the Methodist Society, it made a great noise in the county. For some time they seemed to waver between Calvinism and Armenianism; but I believe that a sermon preached by Mr. Robert Roberts, from those words in the Acts of the Apostles, "For we believe that by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved, even as they,"—determined their choice among the Methodists.

It was said of good Bishop Latimer, that he had a good deal of facetiousness and humourous wit about him, but it was lodged in a mild and gentle soul, so that piety, not passion, had the use of it where it could be useful; so, in like manner, Mr. John Reece had a deal of humour in his conversation, which, when governed by religion and good sense, made him a very agreeable companion. Mr. Robert Dutton had more

simplicity, and checked the sallies of Mr. Reece in his lively discourse. Mr. John Reece, in the early part of his Christian course, was very useful among his neighbours, and kept up discipline and family worship in his house; but after some years, he seemed to slacken in his Christian warfare, although his moral character always stood fair in the world. He left such an example of conjugal affection and parental tenderness as very few men can exemplify, having lived with his wife in the utmost harmony and mutual attachment for 66 years: so that it may be said of them, as Mr. M. Henry said of his parents, they were never reconciled, i. e. there was never any occasion for a reconciliation. After Mr. Reece gave up his farm at Bruerton Park, he removed with his family into the city of Chester. Here his mind got quite comfortable, and he met in class some years, before old age and the infirmities of nature forbad him attending these private means of our holy religion. I visited him several times in his own room, when he was not able to get down stairs, and I always found a singular blessing in praying with and for him. Mr. John Reece's exit was extremely happy and comfortable; he gradually sunk into the arms of death, and went to join his fellow-travellers, who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

41. MRS. MOULSDALE.

The next that I shall bring forward is Mrs. Moulds-dale, wife of Mr. Samuel Moulds-dale, of Frodsham. At the time of her illness, we had a Sunday school at the

back of their house. I therefore went in, and offered my assistance to the sick person. She gladly and thankfully received my visits. I said to her, Mrs. Mouldsdales, the first question I generally ask a sick person is, are you conscious that you are a sinner against God? She answered, I am sensible of that truth. Again I said, have you truly and earnestly repented of your sins? She replied, I have repented, I have felt godly sorrow and compunction of soul. I then said, have you cordially and with your whole heart believed in our Lord Jesus Christ, so as to obtain the remission of your sins? To this she said, I cannot say that I have obtained mercy from God; if I had, I should die in peace: you must pray for me. In my subsequent visits, how gladly did she listen to the overtures of divine mercy and grace tendered to lost and perishing sinners in the gospel of God our Saviour. She would say, pray for me, lest I stumble in the dark valley of the shadow of death. My last visit was just before she departed: her father and brother were present, and they rather objected to my seeing her, until Mr. Mouldsdales took me up stairs. I then kneeled down and commended her soul to God. As we rose from our knees, she said, "Mr. Janion, don't leave me." This she repeated several times before I could understand her. I replied, "I'll come again;" she quickly said, "in the morning." But she died about two hours afterwards. If ever I prayed earnestly for the salvation of any person, it was for Mrs. Mouldsdales.

42. MRS. CATHERINE DARLINGTON.

Our neighbour, Mrs. Catherine Darlington, was another instance of the goodness and loving-kindness of our God. Mr. Samuel Wilkinson visited her in her last illness, and was made a blessing to her soul; while he was at prayer, God set her soul at liberty, and she praised him with a loud voice. Previous to her dissolution, I was frequently a witness of the happiness she enjoyed, and of the tranquillity with which she met her last enemy; so also were many of her neighbours, who joined in prayer and thanksgiving to the Almighty for the grace vouchsafed to her.

43. MR. THOMAS BROWN.

My dear friend and neighbour, Thomas Brown, of Norley, was initiated and instructed in the school of Christ, and was a very worthy and good man. He once attempted to speak in public, but ill health prevented him from proceeding. A few days before his death, he sent for me to write his will and settle his temporal affairs. I enquired how his prospects were for another world; he said, all is well. Thanks be to God, he died in great peace of mind.

44. MRS. SARAH COOKE.

A few years before his death, Mr. Brown sent me a note, desiring me to visit his sister-in-law, Mrs. S. Cooke, of Kingsley. My visits were attended with a very salutary effect; for a month she sought the Lord with many tears and supplications, who spoke peace to the weary and heavy-laden soul. For a week, she mightily

praised God, and then went to the land where the weary are at rest. Her end was triumphant. Just before she departed, she shouted "Glory, glory," so loud that she was heard through the house.

44. THE REV. GEORGE WHITFIELD, A.B.

A celebrated preacher, was born in 1714, in the city of Gloucester. At about twelve years of age he was put to a grammar school; but his mother keeping a tavern, when about fifteen years of age, he served as a waiter. Next year, he got admitted as servitor in Pembroke College, Oxford. Here he distinguished himself by the austerities of his devotion. At the age of twenty-one, the fame of his piety so effectually recommended him to Bishop Benson of Gloucester, that he ordained him immediately after his admission into the ministry. Mr. Whitfield applied himself in the most extraordinary manner to the indefatigable duties of his office, preaching daily in prisons, fields, and open streets, wherever he thought there would be a likelihood of making proselytes. After making himself known throughout England, he embarked for America, where the tenets of Methodism began to spread very fast, under his friend, Mr. Wesley; and first determined on the institution of the Orphan-house at Georgia, which he afterwards effected. After a long course of peregrinations, his fortune increased as his fame extended among his followers, and he erected two very extensive buildings for public worship, under the name of Tabernacles, one in Tottenham Court Road and the other in Moorfields. Here, with the help of some assistants, he

continued for several years, attended by very crowded congregations, quitting the kingdom only occasionally. Mr. Whitfield, by being chaplain to the Countess Dowager of Huntingdon, was also connected with two other religious meetings, one at Bath, the other at Tunbridge, chiefly erected under that lady's patronage. By a lively, fertile, and penetrating genius, by the most unwearied zeal, by a forcible and persuasive delivery, he never failed of the desired effect upon his ever crowded and admiring audience. America, which always engaged much of his attention, was destined to close his eyes, and he died at Newbury, about forty miles from Boston, in New England, in 1770.

45. MR. WILLIAM HAYES.

At what period Mr. Hayes became decidedly pious cannot now be exactly ascertained; it is stated that about the year 1780, he frequently attended the Methodist ministry at Weston, and that in the year 1781 or the following year, he went to hear the venerable founder of Methodism preach at the house of Mr. J. Guest, of Preston. Whether the seed of eternal life was then sown in his heart does not appear; but some time afterwards, at a love-feast held at Mr. G. Pugh's, New Pale, he bore ample testimony to its having sprung up and produced its legitimate fruit. There he gave a minute detail of his conversion, his having attained the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sin, and of the peace and joy he possessed through believing. His subsequent conduct was marked by stability; and uniformly avoiding extremes, he maintained a

steady and consistent walk with God. One very prominent trait in his character was humility; deeply sensible of his many imperfections and frailties, he always appeared willing that others should think him the last and least of all. I myself am witness that no man was more willing to acknowledge himself in an error than Mr. Hayes; and as he sat at the foot of the cross of Christ, in the posture of a humble suppliant and devoted disciple, he was willing to be counted any thing or nothing in the militant church, that his Lord and Master might be all in all. Mr. Hayes made it a point of his Christian duty to maintain peace in his family, and to promote it among his religious friends and neighbours. As a man of prayer, he was a bright example to Christians in general, and to heads of families in particular. In public or social intercourse, in his family and in private, he breathed out ardent desires to the great Head of the Church, in whom all fullness dwells. In his affliction and death, this sinful world lost a constant and powerful advocate.

His attachment to Methodism was firm and undeviating, and proofs of that attachment have been given by his liberality in more instances than the world knew of. Numerous are the known instances of his generosity. Previous to the year 1792, an old barn at the bottom of Church-street in Frodsham was fitted up for public worship, the timber for which had been purchased from Mr. Hayes. When waited on with respect to the payment of the money, he told them, with that unostentatious modesty for which he was remarkable, that he had already crossed their account out of his

book. Another instance of this attachment was expressed by him about the year 1797. Some of the original trustees of the Northwich chapel wished to shut the doors against the itinerant preachers sent by the Methodist Conference, and to open them for the use of ministers not Methodists. That measure was opposed by him and two other trustees, who succeeded, after several meetings and much warm altercation, in restoring peace among the members of the society, and cordiality among the other trustees.

At quarterly meetings, when the financial concerns of the society were adjusted, and considerable deficiencies appeared, "the liberal man devised liberal things," and his purse was ever open to support that cause which he believed had God for its author and its end. The itinerant preachers of the Northwich circuit have been entertained under his hospitable roof nearly thirty years without fee or reward; and when it was proposed that the late Mr. William Young (a respectable local preacher, whose name is dear to many) should devote himself entirely to the work of the ministry, Mr. Hayes cheerfully subscribed five guineas per annum towards his support, which he continued till that good man's death.

But, although he evinced his sincere attachment to the cause of Methodism, he did not confine his charity to that body of Christians; he was not a party man in distributing to the necessities of those around him, but wherever he saw distress, that was a sufficient inducement to afford relief. He was sincerely attached to the Established Church; he always spoke in strong terms

of approbation of her articles, homilies, and liturgy; and he regularly instructed the children attending the Sunday school in the principles of the Church Catechism. Though he devoted so much of his time to the Sunday school, he did not neglect his own family; he never forgot that they had immortal souls to be saved. It was his custom to catechise his own children every Sunday evening, and to hear them repeat the excellent hymns of the Rev. Dr. Watts, a plan which I most earnestly recommend to parents, the good effects of which are now felt by a neighbour's daughter, who came and was catechised with Mr. Hayes's own children, and who now dates her first religious impressions from the advantages she then enjoyed in having so kind a neighbour, who was ever ready to impart instruction to those around him, but more especially to children, to whom he was most affectionate.*

In the religious instruction of the rising generation, he took peculiar delight. About the year 1792, a parish Sunday school was begun at Overton, at the solicitation of Madam Gastril, who had by will bequeathed a hundred pounds to encourage the institution. After the lapse of two years, that school had nearly come to nought, when Mr. Hayes, with another friend, waited upon the incumbent, the Rev. Mr. Page,

* I do not know two more valuable little books, to impress the minds of children with eternal things, than the Rev. Dr. Watts's *Hymns for Children* and the Rev. Dr. Doddridge's *Principles of the Christian Religion*. They should both be committed to memory by every child and young person; the language is adapted to the capacities of children.

and stated their wish to begin a Sunday school in the barn they had fitted up for divine worship. After some explanation, that gentleman gave them the books belonging to the Church Sunday School and the interest arising from Madam Gastril's legacy, and preached a sermon in the parish church to encourage them. The vicar became a subscriber of one guinea a-year. Thus the first Sunday school was revived and established in Frodsham. Mr. Hayes was joint superintendent, and the pleasure of the Lord prospered in his hands. But in process of time, that school was completely broken up by party prejudice, which was no small trial to his benevolent mind; he could not bear to see the children relapse into heathenish ignorance, and become "wild as the untaught Indian brood," without feeling poignantly. Not, however, being in despair of doing good, he in a little while became the patron and superintendent of a Sunday school in the chapel, which flourished much more than the former one, from two to three hundred children being collected in it.

His friendship was sincere, and his attachment when once formed continued strong and affectionate, which always secured confidence and reciprocal affection from others. On the important duties of an executorship being confided to him, the fidelity with which he discharged the whole of those duties was such as to give perfect satisfaction to the surviving relatives and all the parties concerned. Nor will the members which composed the meetings in which the financial concerns of the township of Frodsham were canvassed and adjusted, soon forget the skill and facility with which he examined

and settled the accounts. His departure was preceded by a painful and protracted affliction of three years, during which period attacks of paralysis succeeded each other, the repetition and increasing violence of which shook the earthly tabernacle to its foundation, spread its deadening influence over some of the intellectual faculties, and imposed an almost total silence on that tongue which would otherwise have been heard to tell the wonders of redeeming love and lisp the Saviour's praise. But though "the body was dead because of sin," the spirit was life because of righteousness. And notwithstanding the dire disease had thus committed its ravages on the outward man, it could not touch the immortal part. There all was calm and settled peace. Four days before his departure, his daughter read to him the twenty-third Psalm. "Father," she said, "do you find that the Lord is your shepherd and that you do not want?" "Aye," was his answer. She added, "Do you feel any fear of death?" His immediate reply was, "Oh, no." Having borne that Christian testimony, he soon sunk into a state of torpor, in which he continued until his earth-bound spirit, struggling to be free, "burst from its fetters," and ascended to that glorious place where sickness and debility cannot enter, where the inhabitants are employed in singing, "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

Thus lived and died Mr. Hayes, in the 75th year of his age, whose memory is blessed, whose pious deport-

ment will be admired, and whose Christian benevolence will be long and gratefully remembered.

46. MISS ANN DONE.

Our dear and highly respected neighbour, Miss Ann Done, well deserves to have her name recorded. She was a person well qualified for extensive usefulness in the church and in the world. From the time that she joined the Methodist Society, she filled up her place well, in works of piety towards God, and benevolence towards all men. I do not say that she made coats and garments like Dorcas ; but this I say, that she was frequently employed in preparing clothing for the indigent and necessitous. Had she continued longer in the world, she might have been more abundantly useful in feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and visiting the sick ; but she went to her reward rather suddenly. Give her of the fruits of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates.

47. MR. WILLIAM YOUNG.

My esteemed friend, William Young, was a pious and zealous local preacher, whose labours in various parts of Lancashire and Cheshire were eminently owned of God. He was born at Warrington, in the year 1749. I have frequently heard him relate his conversion to God, with all the feelings of a grateful heart. By reading Russel's Seven Sermons, he was awakened to a sense of his state as a sinner. For three weeks he mourned bitterly, he wet his couch with his tears ; then the spirit of adoption succeeded the spirit of bondage.

Our friend, William Young, did not learn his religion from men and books; it was the inspiration of the Almighty, who giveth understanding. At this time he was as a sparrow alone upon the house-top. For a year or two after his conversion, he stood aloof from the Methodists, until his friend, Mr. R. Harrison, prevailed on him to go and hear for himself; he would not, however, enter into the chapel at first, but stood at the door. Mr. Thos. Johnson, an excellent local preacher, occupied the pulpit that night; his text was, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." The truths delivered on that occasion had their proper effect; he felt their force and energy, and immediately joined the society. A few years after, he was convinced that it was his duty to call sinners to repentance; and for nearly half a century he laboured with increasing success in the sacred cause, so that from Warrington and round about into Cheshire on the south, and Wigan on the north, he fully preached the gospel of the grace of God; neither was his labour in vain in the Lord. As a preacher, his talents were peculiar; for, although plain and unadorned, his sermons were always useful; they were always studied, for before his death he had written more than fourteen hundred plans or skeletons of sermons. For about twenty years together, he preached every Monday evening at the chapel at Warrington, the travelling preacher visiting them but seldom. About sixteen or eighteen years before his death, some of his wealthy friends proposed allowing him five guineas a-piece a-year, that he might be relieved from manual labour, and devote the decline of life wholly to

the work he so truly loved. Many years before his decease he had a slight attack of paralysis, from which he soon recovered. A second and severer attack some years afterward was more painful in its result ; but a third paralytic stroke in December, 1822, laid his poor tabernacle in ruins. His mind was always tranquil, and he constantly spoke with clearness of his acceptance with God. About three weeks before his death, his sufferings were great ; but when his son-in-law mentioned the happy eternity that awaited him, he replied, "Delightful thought ; oh, the word eternity, 'tis delightful." His son then repeated the following lines :

"In age and feebleness extreme,

Who shall a helpless worm redeem ?

Jesus, my utmost hope thou art,

Strength of my failing flesh and heart,

Oh ! could I catch a smile from thee,

And drop into eternity."

On Saturday, August 30, 1823, he closed his eyes, and engaged in prayer. Some of his last words were, "Come, Lord Jesus," and also "Glory, glory." Thus lived and died our dear and worthy friend, William Young, aged 74 years.

48. MR. THOMAS FAULKNER.

The worthy, the warm-hearted, the indefatigable Mr. Thomas Faulkner, of Duddon Heath, deserves to have his name recorded and handed down to posterity, for his zealous attachment to the interest of religion, for his diligent attendance on all the ordinances of divine worship, and for the many excellent qualities

that adorned the mind of that eminent though obscure Christian. He was always foremost in the ranks of the then persecuted followers of the Lord Jesus, and he delighted to take the lead in all our meetings for prayer and Christian communion. Indeed, if he had any faults, it was an excess in religious exercises; for when he got his heart warm, he would continue his prayer for 15 or 20 minutes, and thereby prevented others from exercising their talents; but if this were an error, I wish that we had more. Duddon Heath and Tattenhall were among the first places that received the tenets of Methodism from Alpraham, which place Mr. Wesley had visited. Mr. Faulkner was one of the first at Duddon Heath who opened his house to receive the messengers of the churches. Were it not for such men as Mr. R. Bruce of Tattenhall, Mr. John Gardner, and Mr. Thomas Faulkner, the present Methodist preachers would not have so large a circuit to labour in. They were some of the pioneers to prepare the way of the Lord and to make in the desert a high way for our God. Mr. Faulkner had so many traits in his character allied to the Rev. John Wesley, that I must take notice of them. Was Mr. Wesley an early riser? So was Mr. Faulkner. Did Mr. Wesley husband his time well? So did Mr. Faulkner. Was Mr. Wesley persecuted for righteousness' sake? So was Mr. Faulkner. Did Mr. Wesley return evil for evil, or railing for railing? Neither did Mr. Faulkner.

49. MR. THOMAS ACKERLEY

Was a good man, but lived unnoticed and unknown.

He had formerly heard Mr. Darnley, one of the first race of Methodist preachers. Whenever I called to see him, he had always the New Testament on the bench as a companion, while he worked at his business, which was that of a carpenter. There was one trait in his character which must not be forgotten; he made it a practice to rise at midnight, to give thanks unto his God. He was a very inoffensive man, and died in peace.

50. MRS. MARTHA BRADLEY

Was one of the first fruits of our labours at Runcorn, and was a great ornament to her Christian profession. When she first came among us, she was very cautious lest she should be ensnared; but the Lord opened her heart, as he did that of Lydia, and then she invited us to her house, and we had preaching and class-meetings under her quiet roof for many years. She greatly respected me as her spiritual friend and guide, and I always felt that attachment to her which exists between kindred spirits, who hope to spend an eternity together, in the kingdom of their Father in heaven. She might properly be called the good Martha Bradley.

51. MR. THOMAS BURGESS.

My old friend and neighbour, Mr. Thomas Burgess, of Weston, made a good end: though in the early part of life he was very much opposed to the Methodists and every thing that was good and praise-worthy; on one occasion, when contrary to my wish, the rabble at Weston would set up a May-pole on Whit Monday,

Thomas was one of the ringleaders in mischief; but the grace of God can humble and change the stoutest heart. I believe Thomas Burgess became a true penitent, and gave his heart to Heaven. He assisted our people in their Sunday school at Runcorn. He lived many years after his conversion to God, gave full evidence of a work of grace upon his heart, and then went to his great reward.

52 MRS. SARAH TRICKITT.

Our affectionate neighbour, Mrs. Sarah Trickitt, died January 9, 1830, aged 72 years. She had been a member of the Methodist Society at Kingsley upwards of forty years, and was one of the first that joined the class there. In the infancy of Methodism, those who espoused the cause generally met with considerable opposition. This was the case with our departed sister; her first husband, Mr. Samuel Spruce, had imbibed such prejudice against "this way," that he turned her out of doors one morning in winter, when the snow was deep on the ground. In her distress, she fled to her neighbour and companion in tribulation, Mrs. Mary Gerrard, and enquired of her whether she knew of any situation that would suit her as a servant. Her friend replied, "O yes; I know of a place that will just suit you. Samuel Spruce, your husband, wants just such a person. And if you are afraid to return to him, and your children, I will go with you." This advice was salutary. She went back, and there was no more turning out of doors. About five years after her conversion, she obtained the entire renewal of her soul in

the image of her Maker; and from that time, she held on her way, and waxed stronger and stronger. In drawing the character of Mrs. Trickitt, we have to notice her comely deportment; she was an example of neatness and simplicity, like one of the primitive matrons of apostolic times, or like one of the holy women that St. Peter so beautifully describes, 1 Peter v. 3. For thirty-seven years, she professed to love God with all her heart, and her life and conversation fully proved that this was no vain profession. Frequently have we heard her express the overflowing of a grateful heart in our class-meetings and love-feasts. Her communion with her Saviour was constant and uninterrupted. She was diligent in her attendance on all her ordinances of God. She was no enthusiast, expecting the end without the means; she was seldom absent from the meeting of her class, was constant at sermons, and at the Lord's supper. There were many traits in her character deserving the imitation of the junior members of our societies. She felt tenderly for the salvation of her neighbours, especially for the unconverted. Frequently have we heard her pour out her soul to God in supplication and tears for the whole human race. Her alms were as extensive as her means and opportunities. The death of this excellent woman was rather sudden and unexpected. She bruised her arm, a mortification took place in a day or two, and removed her from the church militant to the church triumphant. On the Sunday before her affliction, she said, "I am quite ready, but I should like to have an easy death." And

so it was. On the day before she departed, she sung with great animation part of that beautiful hymn—

“Though waves and storms go o’er my head.”

In this manner did this good woman finish her earthly pilgrimage. “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.”

53. MISS KITTY SMITH,

Of Peckforton, was a person of singular piety, talents, and usefulness; she had a good understanding, a sound judgment, and deep Christian experience. She was also well qualified for public speaking, as she had a fine voice, good elocution, and a remarkable gift in prayer and exhortation. We have often lamented that no memoir of her labours, experience, and usefulness, in the cause of Christ, has been presented to the world. She was so well known, and so deservedly respected, that I wonder none of her friends took up their pen to bear testimony to her character and good conversation. I used to say to her, Kitty, you have more good homes than perhaps any other person in the county. She died at Mr. Hashall’s, in her 34th year.

54. MR. THOMAS BRISCOE

Kept the Globe Inn. He had made very free with his constitution, and was in a rapid decline. Mrs. Briscoe desired me to visit her husband; but a public house is often a noisy place to pray in. I went several times before I could get him on his knees; I then made it a matter of prayer to God, that if I could be of any service to this man, he would prepare the way. While I was in earnest supplication to Heaven, and before I

rose from my knees, I heard a monitor within, saying unto me, "If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked of his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hands." The impression was so strong, that I turned my head to see whether any person was in the room with me. I had now got my message. When I came to the house, Miss Briscoe invited me to go up stairs, as her father had now taken his bed. I got the Bible, read them my text, and warned them to flee from the wrath to come. The Lord sent home the word of his grace; Mr. Briscoe became a true penitent, cried earnestly to God for mercy, and invited all who came to see him to pray for him. I hope I shall meet him in heaven.

55. MRS. CLAY.

I also visited Mrs. Clay, daughter of Mr. Edward Briscoe, in her last illness. She had passed through great sufferings, but at this time enjoyed that peace which passeth all understanding, and ripened fast for glory. She died before she was thirty years of age. Her young sister died when she was 16 or 17 years of age. I visited her several times in her last illness, which was a consumption; but young as she was, her sins, were brought to her remembrance, and there was hope in her death.

56. MISS FINCHETT,

Eldest daughter of Mr. Finchett, of Kelsall, I likewise visited about the same time. She was a fine, accomplished young lady, who had been brought up at Ches-

ter, with expectations of great worldly possessions from her friends at Boughton; but death, like a relentless monster, destroyed all her towering hopes, and laid her as low as the clods of the valley. I found her in a very teachable disposition; she received my admonitions with great thankfulness, and there was hope in her latter end.

57. MARTHA BENNION.

I took a great deal of pains with the Rowe's family. I introduced preaching into Kelsall, and gathered a society of 10 or 15 members. We occupied Rowe's barn first as a place to preach in; then we had the dwelling-house, and afterwards we fitted up one of the out-houses as a place for public worship: now they have a handsome good chapel at Kelsall. Martha Bennion, the youngest of the Rowe's family, did not like our class-meetings at the first, but afterwards she joined the society, married, and went to Liverpool; but the town not agreeing with her health, she came and died among her friends at Kelsall. She was a worthy and respectable member of our society 10 or 15 years. And her suffering sister, Mary Rowe, I considered as the beloved of the Lord. Some of the brothers are also useful members of civil and religious society, and I hope will be my rejoicing in the day of the Lord.

58. MR. WILLIAM ASBURY.

My kind-hearted neighbour, Mr. William Asbury, is worthy a place in my short memoirs, for he has borne

the burden and heat of the day. He was converted to God when about thirty years of age; and though he lived in a dark and benighted place, his candle never went out, neither did he put it under a bushel. We introduced preaching into Barrow, where he lived, raised a society of serious people, and spent many a happy hour together. Mr. Asbury was a sensible and intelligent man, though a wood-cutter. In my illness, the interest of religion suffered at Barrow, until my beloved son, Charles Janion, gathered the society again. Now (1827) there is a good society at Barrow, a place for public worship, and two or three local preachers among them. William Asbury made a good end.

59. MR. JOS. SNELSON.

When I lived at Mouldsworth, I was invited to visit a son of Mr. Jos. Snelson, who came and died at his uncle's, Mr. Peter Snelson, of Manley Hall. I took some pains to shew him the way of salvation; I enforced the necessity of repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ; I insisted on the necessity of regeneration, or a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness. Alas! a sick bed is a poor place to learn the lessons of divine grace, to become wise unto salvation. He had been the head waiter at the principal hotel in Macclesfield. He was a kind husband, a tender-hearted parent, and had laboured incessantly for his family, frequently setting up whole nights together; by this practice he had brought on a decline; but he had not thought much about the concerns of his soul. At my visits, his uncle and wife

were mostly in the room with us, and I used great plainness of speech among them. My soul travailed in birth for the poor sick man, who received my admonitions with great thankfulness and cordiality; and there was hope in his death. The good seed which I sowed in Manley Hall was not lost. The wife and children of J. Snelson, I hear, are doing well at Macclesfield.

60. MR. WILLIAM SHONE.

My good old friend and neighbour, William Shone, of Netherton, was a distinguished character among the Methodists from the beginning. He was early converted to God, and enjoyed the comforts of religion in his youth; but afterwards he turned aside from the ways of the Lord, and fell into a backsliding state. About the time he removed into our parish, he had joined the society again, had recovered his peace, and afterwards held on his way to the end of his pilgrimage. I can bear testimony to his faithful and upright conversation; but I never thought him designed or qualified for a preacher of the gospel. He was very well as an exhorter and class-leader; and I believe he was useful and made a blessing to our people at Kingsley and Norley. He brought up a large family by dint of labour and industry. His wife was a weak and tender woman, and in the decline of life, she fell into great debility; but she was a patient sufferer many years. They both ended well. I never knew a blot in Wm. Shone's character, and I was acquainted with him for fifty years.

61. THOMAS A KEMPIS.

An ingenious and pious author gives the following account of Thomas a Kempis:—

“All that I have been able to learn in Germany upon good authority, concerning Thomas a Kempis, is as follows:—He was born at Kempis or Kempen, a small walled town in the duchy of Cleves and diocese of Cologn. His family name was Hamerlin, which signifies, in the German language, a little hammer. We find also that his parents were named John and Gertrude Hamerlin. He lived chiefly in the monastery of Mount St. Agnes, where his effigy, together with a prospect of the monastery, was engraven on a plate of copper that lay over the body. The said monastery is now called Bergh Clooster, or, as we would say in the English, Hill Cloister: many strangers in their travels visit it.

“Kempis was certainly one of the best and greatest men since the primitive ages. His book, *Of the Imitation of Christ*, has seen nearly forty editions in the original Latin, and above sixty translations have been made from it into modern languages.

“Our author died August 8, 1471, aged 92 years. He had no manifest infirmities of old age, and retained his eye-sight perfect to the last. In the engraving on the copper above mentioned, is represented a person respectfully presenting to him a label, on which is written a verse to this effect—

“O! where is peace? for thou its path hast trod.”

To which Kempis returns another label, inscribed as follows—

“In poverty, retirement, and with God,”

“He was a canon regular of Augustin’s, and sub-prior of Mount St. Agnes Monastery. He composed his treatise, *Of the Imitation of Christ*, in the sixty-first year of his age, as appears from a note of his own writing, in the library of his convent.”

62. DR. WATTS.

Dr. Isaac Watts was born at Southampton, July 17, 1675, where his father kept a boarding-school for young gentlemen. The Doctor was the eldest son of a numerous family, and was noticed for his sprightliness and readiness of parts.

At four years of age, he began to learn Latin, in which, as well as Greek, he made such proficiency, under the Rev. Mr. Pincherne, a clergyman, that a subscription was proposed for sending him to one of the Universities, intending to continue among the Dissenters. In 1693, he came up to London, for academical education. Among his fellow-students, were the Rev. Dr. Josiah Hort, afterwards Archbishop of Tuam, and Mr. Hughes the poet.

At twenty he finished his academical course, and retired for two years to his father’s, at Southampton; from hence he was invited to Sir John Hartopp’s family at Stoke-Newington, near London, to undertake the tuition of his son. Here he enjoyed the friendship of a gentleman of great abilities as well as piety, and continued in Sir John’s family five years.

He began to preach on his birth-day, at twenty-four years of age, in 1698, and was chosen the same year to assist Dr. Chauncey, pastor of the Dissenting Church in Mark Lane, London. He was ordained in 1702, and succeeded Dr. Chauncey in the pastoral office. Though his frequent indispositions made it necessary for the church to supply him with a stated assistant, yet he went on in the discharge of his duty, until the year 1712. In September this year he was seized with a violent fever, which so undermined his constitution, that he never recovered it to the day of his death. It was not till October 1716, an interval of four years, that he was able to return to his public duty. This sickness was the happy occasion of his being received into Sir Thomas Abney's family, where he resided, honoured and beloved, no less than six and thirty years; and though Sir Thomas died in 1722, yet his generous friendship still survived in Lady Abney and her daughters; and let it ever be remembered, where the name of Dr. Isaac Watts is considered as a blessing to mankind, that, under Providence, it was owing to Sir Thomas Abney and his Lady.

In the year 1728, the Universities of Edinburgh and Aberdeen conferred upon him, in the most honourable manner, (but without his knowledge) the degree of Doctor in Divinity. But what chiefly deserves our attention are the graces and virtues with which the life of this venerable man was adorned.

It is surprising that Dr. Watts attained nearly the seventy-fifth year of his age, especially when we consider his great natural weakness and the severe attacks

of pain, with which he was almost continually exercised. Worn out at length with various afflictions, he began to decline very fast towards the latter end of the year 1748. Sometimes, in withdrawing from the family and retiring to rest, he said, "If his master was to say to him, he had no more work for him to do, he should be glad to be dismissed that night." "I bless God," said he, "I can lie down with comfort, not being solicitous whether I wake in this world or another." Once, in conversation with a friend, being almost worn out with his infirmities, he said, "They are the plain promises which are now my support, and I bless God, they are plain promises, which do not require much labour or pains to understand; for I can do nothing now but look into my Bible for some promise to support me, and live upon that."

On his death-bed, when the lamp of life was glimmering in its last decay, an intimate friend asked him, if he felt any pain? He mildly answered, No. On being asked respecting his soul, "Whether all was comfortable?" he replied, "It was, and confessed it to be a great mercy." On Nov. 24, the day before he died, he lay easy, and his mind continued peaceful and serene, silently waiting for his change. The next day, in the afternoon, he expired without a struggle or a groan.

He was interred in Bunhill-fields, London, amidst a vast concourse of people. At the grave a funeral oration was delivered by Dr. S. Chandler, in which were the following commendations of the deceased. "We here commit to the ground the venerable remains of one

who, being intrusted with many excellent talents by Him who is the author of every good and perfect gift, cheerfully and unweariedly employed them as a faithful steward of the manifold grace of God in his Master's service; approving himself as a minister of Christ in much patience, afflictions, and distresses, by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the armour of righteousness, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report; and who, amidst trials from within and from without, was continued by the kind providence of God, and the powerful supports of his grace, to a good old age, honoured and beloved by all parties, retaining his usefulness till he had just finished his course.

"O how beautiful is that voice from heaven, which has thus pronounced, blessed are the dead who die in the Lord! Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works follow them."

His stature was beneath the common standard, perhaps not above five feet, or at most five feet two inches. His body was lean, his face oval, his nose aquiline, his complexion fair and pale, his forehead low, his cheek bones rather prominent; but his countenance, on the whole, by no means disagreeable. His eyes were small and grey, and whenever he was attentive or eager, amazingly piercing and expressive. His voice was rather slender, but regular, audible, and pleasant.

He had a lively and abounding genius, joined with the most patient indefatigable industry; a quick conception, with a tenacious memory; a great mind cultivated by study, and enriched with the treasures of a

noble literature. He was humble without disguise; patient without fainting or complaint; firm without rigour; and studious without gloom or stiffness. With equal truth it might be said, that he was learned without pride; polite without dissimulation; and bountiful without vanity or imprudence.

In the whole course of his life he appeared to have a single eye to the glory of God, and the good of mankind. He died in peace, honoured and lamented, and has left behind him an example worthy the imitation of all, and especially of the ministers of Christ.

AN ACCOUNT OF GENERAL DYKERN.

[By the Rev. Dr. Fresenius, Senior of the Clergy at Frankfort.]

After the battle of Bergen in Germany, among the many wounded, who were brought into Frankfort upon the Mayne, there was the Right Honourable George Charles Dykern, Baron, Lieutenant-general of the Saxon troops, in the service of the King of France. He was born of an ancient and noble family of Silesia, on April 10, 1710, so that it was just on his birth-day he received his wound. He was of equal abilities as a minister in the closet, and a general in the field. In his younger years he had gone through a regular course of study in the University, and made great proficiency in philosophy, especially in mathematics. Afterwards he studied Polemic Divinity, till he reasoned himself into an infidel. During his illness he shewed not the least desire of pious company or serious discourse, till

the surgeon let his valet de chambre know that he could not live long. The man then asked his master whether he did not chuse to be visited by a clergyman? He answered with warmth, "I shall not trouble those gentlemen. I know well myself what to believe and do." His man, not discouraged, continued thus, "My lord, have you ever found me wanting in my duty, all the time I have been in your service?" He answered, "No." "Then, replied he, I will not be wanting now. The surgeons count you past hopes of recovery; but every one is afraid to tell you so. You stand upon the brink of eternity. Pray, sir, order a clergyman to be called." He paused a little, but soon gave his hand to his servant, thanked him for his honesty, and ordered to send for me. When I came, the man told me plainly, the general was a professed infidel. I went in, and after a short compliment, said, "I am told, my lord, your life is near an end. Therefore I presume, without any ceremony, to ask you one plain question: is the state of your soul such, that you can entertain a solid hope of salvation?" He answered, "Yes." "On what do you ground this hope?" He replied, "I never committed any wilful sin. I have been liable to frailties; but I trust in God's mercy, and the merits of his Son, that he will have mercy upon me." These words he uttered very slowly, especially *the merits of his Son*. I made the following reply. "I am apt to believe, that you are not tainted with the grossest vices. But I fear, you a little too presumptuously boast, of never having committed any wilful sin. If you would be saved, you must acknowledge your being utterly corrupted by sin, and

consequently deserving the curse of God, and eternal damnation. As to your hoping for God's mercy, *through the merits of his Son*, I beg to ask, do you believe God has a Son? That his Son assumed our nature, in order to be our Saviour: that in the execution of his office, he was humbled unto death, even the death upon the cross; and that hereby he has given an ample satisfaction for us, and recovered our title to heaven?" He answered, "I cannot now avoid a more minute description of the state of my soul. Let me tell you, doctor, I have some knowledge of philosophy, by which I have chose for myself a way of salvation. I have always endeavoured to live a sober life, to the utmost of my power, not doubting but the Being of all beings would then graciously accept me. In this way I stood in no need of Christ, and therefore I did not believe on him. But, if I take the scriptures to be a divine revelation, this way of mine I perceive is not the right one. I must believe in Christ, and through him come to God." I replied, "You say, *if* you take the scriptures to be a divine revelation!" He fetched a deep sigh, and said, O God, thou wilt make me say, "*Because* I take the scriptures to be thy word." I said, "There are grounds and reasons enough to demonstrate the divine origin of Christianity, as I could shew from its most essential principles, were not the period of your life so short. But we need not now that diffusive method; faith being the gift of God. A poor sinner tottering on the brink of eternity, has not time to enquire about grounds and reasons. Rather betake yourself to earnest prayer for faith; which if you do, I doubt not but God will

give it you." I had no sooner spoken these words, but pulling off his cap, and lifting up his eyes and hands, he cried out, "O Almighty God, I am a poor, cursed sinner, worthy of damnation. But Lord Jesus, eternal Son of God, thou diedst for my sins also. It is through thee alone I can be saved. O give me faith, and strengthen that faith." Being extremely weak, he was obliged to stop here. A little after he asked is faith enough for salvation?" "Yes, sir, said I, if it be living faith." "Methinks, said he, it is so already; and it will be more so by and bye: let us pray for it." Perceiving he was very weak, to give him some rest, I retired into the next room. But he soon sent to call me. I found him praying, and Jesus was all he prayed for. I reminded him of some scriptures treating of faith in Christ, and he was much delighted with them. Indeed he was quite swallowed up by the grace of Jesus, and would hear of nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified. He cried out, "I do not know how it is with me. I never in my life felt such a change. I have power to love Jesus, and to believe in him, whom I so long rejected. O my Jesus, how merciful art thou to me."

About noon I slept home; but he sent for me directly, that I could scarce eat my dinner. We were both filled with joy, as partakers of the same grace, which is in Jesus Christ; and that in such a manner, as if we had been acquainted together for many years. Many officers of the army came to see him continually, to all of whom he talked freely of Jesus, of the grace of the Father in him, and of the power of the Holy Ghost through

him : wondering without ceasing at his having found Jesus, and at the happy change, by which all things on this side eternity, were become indifferent to him.

In the afternoon he desired to partake of the Lord's-supper, which he received with a melting, praising, and rejoicing heart. All the rest of the day he continued in the same state of soul. Toward evening he desired, that if his end should approach, I would come to him, which I promised. But he did not send for me till the next morning. I was told by his valet, that he slept well for some hours, and then awaking, prayed for a considerable time, continually mentioning the name of our Lord, and his precious blood, and that he had desired several of the officers, to make his conversation known to his court, (that of the king of Poland.) After some discourse I asked, "Has your view of Christ and his redemption, been altered or obscured since yesterday?" He answered, "Neither altered nor obscured. I have no doubt, not even a remote one. It is just the same with me, as if I had always thus believed and never doubted. So gracious is the Lord Jesus to me a sinner."

The second day he was unwearied in prayer and exercises of faith. Toward evening he sent for me in haste. When I came, I found him dying, and in a kind of delirium; so I could do no more than give him now and then a word of comfort. I prayed afterwards for him and those that were present, some of whom were of high birth and rank. I then by imposition of hands, as usual, gave him a blessing, which being done, he expired immediately. A royal prince who

was there (prince of Xavier of Saxony) could not forbear weeping. The rest of the officers bewailed the loss of their general, yet praised God for having shewn such mercy toward him.

I wrote an account of it without delay to his mother, and had an immediate answer: she was a lady of seventy-two, of exemplary piety. She praised God for his mercy, adding, "That he had now answered her prayers, which she had never ceased to offer on his behalf for eleven years."

ACCOUNT OF A FRENCH PREACHER.

The Abbé Maury (Preacher in ordinary to his French majesty) speaking and extolling that eminent Exordium of Cicero's first Oration against Cataline, Quosque tandem abutere, &c. says,—

"If any traces of this ancient and vigorous eloquence remain among us, (which is no other than the first voice of nature) it is among the Missions; and it is in the country that examples of this kind should be sought. There apostolic men, endued with a strong and vigorous imagination, know no other *success* than *conversions*, and no other *applauses* than *tears*. I grant that destitute of taste, they often descend to burlesque details, but they strike the senses strongly, their threatenings impress terror, and the people hear them with concern.

"The most justly celebrated man of this stamp in the present age, is Mons. Bridaine. This man was born with a popular eloquence, full of images and emotions;

and few possessed in a more eminent degree than he, the excellent talent of rendering himself master of an assembled multitude. He had such a fine voice as rendered credible all the prodigies which history recounts of the declamation of the ancients. He was as easily heard by ten thousand persons in the open air, as if he had spoke under the most sonorous arch. In all that he said, turns naturally rhetorical might be observed.

“I remember to have heard him repeat the exordium of the first sermon he preached in St. Sulpicius’s church in Paris, in 1751. The nobility of the capital came to hear him, through curiosity. Bridaine perceived in the assembly many bishops, decorated persons, and an innumerable crowd of ecclesiastics: but that sight far from intimidating, served only to inspire him with the exordium you are about to read. Behold what my memory recals of that piece, by which I have always been very powerfully affected, and which will not perhaps appear unworthy of Bossuet or Demosthenes.”

“At the sight of an auditory so new to me, it seems, my brethren, I should only open my mouth to solicit favour in the behalf of a poor *missionary*, destitute of all the talents which you require in those who speak to you concerning your salvation. Nevertheless I feel to-day a sentiment widely different; and if I appear depressed, do not suppose that I abase myself to the wretched inquietudes of vanity, as though I were accustomed to preach myself. God forbid! that a minister of heaven should ever think he needed an apology before you, for whosoever you are, you are all no other than sinners like myself. It is before your God and

mine, that I feel myself this moment constrained to smite upon my breast.

“Till the present, I have published the laws of the Most High in temples covered with straw; I have preached the rigors of penitence to the unfortunate who are destitute of bread; I have announced the most terrifying truths of my religion to the good inhabitants of the country. Unhappy man! What have I done? I have saddened the poor, the best friends of my God! I have carried consternation and grief into those simple and faithful souls, which I should rather have pitied and comforted. *Here* my looks fall on the *great* and on the *rich*, on the oppressors of suffering humanity, or on sinners audacious and obdurate. Ah! it is *here* that I should cause the sacred word to resound with all its strength and thunder, and place with me in this pulpit, on the one side *death* which threatens you, and on the other, my great God, who is about to judge you.

“I hold to-day your sentence in my hand. Tremble then before me, ye proud and disdainful men who hear me: the necessity of salvation, the certainty of death, the uncertainty of that hour so terrible to you, final impenitence, the last judgment, the small number of the elect, hell, and above all eternity! eternity! These are the subjects with which I am about to entertain you, and which, doubtless, I ought to reserve for *you* alone. Ah! what need have I of your suffrages, which might probably condemn me without saving you? God is now going to affect you, whilst his unworthy minister shall speak to you, for I have acquired a long experience of his mercies. Penetrated then with horror for

your past iniquities, you shall come and cast yourselves into my arms, pouring out tears of penitential compunction, and by the power of remorse you will find me to be eloquent enough."

Who does not at the first view perceive that this eloquence is far superior to the *cold* pitiful pretensions of modern genius? In apologizing (so to speak) for his having preached on *hell* in the villages, Bridaine assumed in an extensive manner all the authority which belonged to his ministry over his *auditory*, and thereby prepared their hearts for the terrible truths which he proposed to declare. The exordium alone gave him the privilege of saying every thing. Many persons still remember something of his discourse on *eternity*, and the terror which he spread throughout the assembly, while uniting (according to his custom) odd comparisons to sublime transports, he cried, "Alas, my brethren! on what do you establish your belief that your last day is so distant? Is it on your *youth*? Yes, you answer,* I have but twenty years, but thirty,—Alas! it is not you who have but twenty or thirty years, but it is *death* who has already twenty years, thirty years in advance upon you. Take heed to it, eternity approaches! Do you know what eternity is? It is a clock, the pendulum of which incessantly says, ALWAYS, EVER, EVER, ALWAYS, ALWAYS! During these revolutions a damned soul cries out, "What o'clock is it?" And the same voice answers him, "ETERNITY!"

The thundering voice of Bridaine added on these

* The French Idiom, for "I am twenty or thirty years of age,

occasions a new energy to his eloquence; and the auditory familiarized with his language and ideas, appeared then in consternation before him. The profound silence which reigned in the assembly was from time to time interrupted in a very sensible manner, by the long and mournful sighs, which proceeded at once from all the extremities of the church where he preached.

Orators, who think of nothing but your own glory, fall down at the feet of this apostolic man, and learn from a missionary what true eloquence is! The people! The people! These are the *first*, and perhaps the only judges of our talents. The success of this popular preacher is infallible, when the preacher has a voice strong enough to support its vehemence, and a taste delicate enough to shun its excess. How great is the error, which banishes from the evangelical ministry all these terrifying subjects, which warm the imagination of the preacher, and bring trouble into the consciences of the hearers? Vid. "L'Eloquence de la Chaire," page 44.

When Alexander, the emperor of Russia, came to the throne, few bibles were found in his empire, and the term bible reader was only used in derision, or a mark of contempt. A high place in the church and state became vacant, by the death of the person who had filled it. The emperor appointed to it his favourite friend, the prince Galitzim, who had been and was still his constant companion in all his pursuits of pleasure,

and who at first refused it, on the plea of his ignorance of religion. But this objection was overruled by the emperor, who considered it of no weight. The Prince, on his first interview with the venerable archbishop Platoff, requested him to point out some book which would give him a concise view of the Christian religion. The archbishop was rather surprised at the Prince's professed ignorance, but recommended the Bible. The Prince said he could not think of reading that book. "Well," replied the archbishop, "there is no other that that will give you a correct view of the Christian religion." "Then I must remain ignorant of it; reading the Bible is out of the question," was his reply. The words, however, of the venerable Platoff remained on his mind; and he shortly afterwards bought, and read the Bible. The effects were soon visible. Still he was not known to be a Bible reader. But his change and manners were treated with contempt. Every one was disturbed now with the threatened Invasion of the French. Galitzin was not. His companions were astonished. Was he become a traitor to the Prince? It was impossible: his loyalty was undoubted. At this important crisis, he thought it his duty to acquaint the Emperor of the book on which he rested unmoved in the threatened danger. He requested an interview. It was granted. The Invasion was the first subject of conversation; and next, as closely connected with it, the Prince's conduct. The Emperor demanded upon what principle he remained calm and unmoved amidst the universal alarm? The Prince drew from his pocket a Bible, and held it towards the Emperor, who putting

out his hand to receive it, by some means it fell and opened at the 91st Psalm. "O that your majesty would seek this retreat, said the Prince, as he read the words of the Psalm. They separated. A day was appointed for public prayer. The minister who preached took for his subject the 91st Psalm. The Emperor surprised, enquired of the Prince if he had mentioned the circumstance that occurred at the interview, who assured him that he had not named it. A short time after, the Emperor having a few minutes leisure, and perhaps feeling the want of Christian support, sent for his chaplain to read the Bible to him in his tent. He came and began the 91st Psalm.—"Hold," said the Emperor; "Who told you to read that?" God, replied the chaplain. "How," exclaimed Alexander. "Surprised at your message," continued the chaplain, "I fell upon my knees before my God, and besought him to teach my weak lips what to speak. I felt that part of the holy word clearly pointed out to me. Why your majesty interrupted me I know not." These circumstances made a deep impression on the Emperor's mind; and after the memorable battle of Leipzic, he wrote to the Empress, a virtuous and pious Princess, to whom he had been married soon after his accession, but from whom he had shortly after separated, to come and see what the Lord* had done for his soul; after which they lived in the strictest bond of union and connubial happiness.

ERRATA.

In page 30, for William Coultres, read William Coultas; for John Greaves, read John Greeves; for Samuel Smith and John Smith read William Smith; for Charles Parry, read Charles Penny; for William Kay, read Stephen Kay.—In page 30, to the Trustees of St. John-street Chapel, add George Lowe, Wm. Lowe, and William S. Guest.—Page 33, line 16, for promised, read procured.—Page 34, for New Pole, read New Pale.—Page 36, line 7, for “here we had,” read “we continued to have.”—Page 39, for Lowe’s Serious Call, read Law’s Serious Call.—Page 57 and 78, for Gadscroft, read Godscroft.—Page 78, for “So was Mrs. Williams’ eldest sister, Miss Gardner, who got,” read “Mrs. Williams’ eldest sister, Miss Gardner, obtained.”—Page 80, for “None is like Jesus,” read “None is like Jeshurun’s God.”—Page 99, line 23, read “Of the Globe Inn, Kellsall.”

